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Lib Dems stake coalition claim

Ashdown wants four posts in Labour cabinet

BY ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

PADDY Ashdown will seek four cabinet posts for Liberal Democrats in any coalition negotiations with a minority Labour government.

He believes that if any coalition government were to contain only one or two representatives from his party they would be constantly harassed by sheer weight of numbers.

The Liberal Democrat leader thinks that Alan Beith, his party's economic spokesman, would make an ideal chief secretary to the Treasury. He also wants top table posts for Sir David Steel, the former Liberal leader, and for Menzies Campbell, his party's defence spokesman.

Mr Ashdown, who is said

by friends not to be determined on any particular role for himself, is believed to be prepared to become education secretary in a coalition cabinet. The Liberal Democrats have made education a priority throughout their campaign, emphasising their intention to put up on income tax to pay for a £2 billion expansion. They have been rewarded by a recent poll showing that they are regarded as having a better policy on that issue than either of the two main parties.

Sources close to Mr Ashdown say he would like Sir David Steel to be offered a foreign affairs portfolio with a defence post going to Mr Campbell. The Liberal Democrat leader is not, however,

keen on suggestions in some quarters that he could become the minister for Europe, which Neil Kinnock is said to be contemplating. Colleagues say Mr Ashdown believes it is important for him to remain in the public eye, and he feels this can be best achieved if he takes a domestic ministry.

He responds to gibes from commentators that he is seeking to become the Hans-Dietrich Genscher of the British political scene (the Free Democrat politician who has been at the centre of the German coalition since 1974) by pointing out that while Herr Genscher's party gets about 7 per cent of the vote he expects to get three times that support. The implication is that he expects several cabinet jobs for his team.

Mr Ashdown is keen for his party to become involved in a full coalition rather than a pact because he believes that his MPs should gain experience in the disciplines of collective decision-making. He will also be pushing for prominent posts for Charles Kennedy, the party president, and for Malcolm Bruce, the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrat party. Others whom he would expect to see in the ranks of a coalition government are Jim Wallace, the chief whip, who would be closely involved in party links, and Simon Hughes and Matthew Taylor.

He will also be pushing for Lord Holme of Cheltenham, who played a major role in drafting the Liberal Democrat manifesto, to be given a role in Northern Ireland. Robert MacLennan, who was briefly leader of the SDP and a prime mover in drafting the Liberal Democrat constitution, will be the party's favoured candidate to tackle constitutional reform issues.

Under Labour's rules, Mr Kinnock must give cabinet positions to the 18 elected members of the shadow cabinet. He would also have to bring in a defence secretary and a Northern Ireland secretary. Mr Kinnock, who is said to be keen on Mr O'Neill and Kevin McNamara, the party spokesmen on these subjects, are not elected members of the shadow cabinet.

Mr Kinnock would also have to appoint a Lord Chancellor and a Leader of the House of Lords. If he dropped any of the resulting 24 Labour posts to appoint Liberal Democrats, it would be likely to create considerable ructions within his party.

Any prime minister is allowed only 22 paid cabinet posts and Mr Kinnock would exceed that number even before he had created the promised cabinet posts for women, and for environmental protection.

Mr Ashdown's audacity was greeted with derision in Labour circles last night, but it reflects the growing confidence in the Liberal Democrat camp that they will return to Westminster with a larger contingent of MPs than they have at present.

Election 92, pages 9-12
Peter Riddell, page 16
Diary, page 16
Leading article
and letters, page 17
L&T section, page 5



Family backing: Neil Kinnock with his son Stephen at the Labour party's celebrity reception in Millbank, London, last night

Underdogs head to Cup final

BY JOHN GOODBODY

SUNDERLAND became the first team from the second division to reach the FA Cup final for 12 years when they beat Norwich City 1-0 at Hillsborough yesterday. Their opponents have yet to be decided because, in the other semi-final, Liverpool drew 1-1 with Portsmouth, also of the second division.

John Byrne kept up his record of scoring in every round of the competition when he got the decisive goal at Hillsborough, which was staging its first semi-final since the 1989 disaster. Police later praised the behaviour of the fans.

For seven minutes at Highbury, it looked as if Portsmouth could be in the final at Wembley on May 9. After a goalless 90 minutes, Darren Anderton gave Portsmouth the lead in extra time. With three minutes left, Ronnie Whelan equalised. The replay will be at Villa Park on April 13.

Nigel Mansell, of Britain, completed a hat-trick of victories in the opening three Grands Prix of the Formula One season when he led his Williams team-mate, Riccardo Patrese, home in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Mansell now has 30 points, with Patrese on 18.

Cup reports, pages 28 and 30
Mansell triumph, page 30

Iran bombs rebel camps in Iraq

BY MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA AND MICHAEL EVANS IN LONDON

RELATIONS between Iran and Iraq were at their lowest yesterday since the end of the eight-year war in 1988, following a bombing raid by Iranian F4 Phantoms on camps inside Iraq used by mujahedin rebels opposed to the Tehran regime.

Baghdad radio claimed Iraqi anti-aircraft guns shot down one of eight Iranian Phantoms and captured its wreckage.

The bombing raid inside Iraq, five days before parliamentary elections in Iran, was the first Iranian air strike on Iraqi territory since a UN-brokered ceasefire on August 20, 1988, and the most serious clash since March last year. The two former enemies have yet to sign a formal peace treaty.

Tehran said the raid was in retaliation for a mujahedin attack on two Iranian border villages on Saturday. Iran, the official Iranian news agency, said mujahedin forces had crossed the border near the town of Qasr-e-Shahin, killing, wounding and kidnapping an unspecified number of villagers.

The F4s bombed a mujahedin base at Ashraf, near the town of Khalis, 31 miles inside Iraq and 40 miles north of Baghdad. An Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman in Baghdad described the raids as "a blatant and unjustified aggression" and issued vague threats of retaliation. "Iraq warns the reckless Iranian regime of the consequences of this impudent aggressive act and holds it fully responsible for the grave consequences," the official said.

The breakdown in relations Continued on page 20, col 1

Clinton slips up over draft again

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BILL Clinton's battered credibility was dealt a blow yesterday by fresh draft-dodging allegations, just as Paul Tsongas made the surprise announcement that he might well re-enter the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, if the results of tomorrow's critical New York primary were favourable.

During a televised debate Mr Clinton again clashed furiously with Jerry Brown, his opponent, after the former California governor called him the "prince of sleaze". However, the Los Angeles Times reported that Mr Brown, who campaigns on the premise that politics have been corrupted by big money, had himself appointed scores of campaign contributors to California judgeships.

The latest twist in the most bizarre Democratic presidential contest of recent times came when Mr Clinton, the governor of Arkansas, was forced to acknowledge that he had sought a deferment from the Vietnam draft in 1969 after - not before - receiving a draft induction notice while a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. This appeared to contradict his previous statements.

Mr Clinton's admission came after the Los Angeles Times published a letter which Cliff Jackson, a fellow American student at Oxford, had written to his old college professor in May 1969. "Bill Clinton, friend and Rhodes scholar from Hot Springs, Arkansas, received his induction notice last week," it said.

Later that summer Mr Clinton obtained a draft deferment by agreeing to join the Arkansas University law school and its Reserve Officer Training Corps. In fact, he returned to Oxford. Mr Clinton's headquarters said in a statement that he had successfully applied for a deferment until the end of Oxford's summer term after receiving the notice.

This latest disclosure came on the eve of a primary which the battered Mr Clinton must win if he is to appear strong enough to take on President Bush. Mr Tsongas, who "suspended" his candidacy last month for lack of funds, said he would announce his intentions on Wednesday having seen how well both he and Mr Clinton did in New York.

White House gloom, page 15

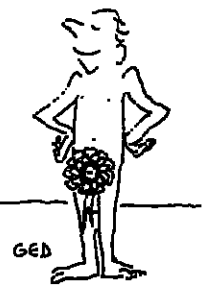
TODAY IN
THE TIMES

POPULAR
CHOICE



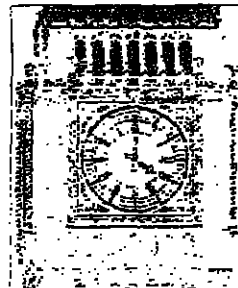
Handel's Messiah has been top of the choral charts for 250 years but the composer was less than confident about the first performance Life & Times, page 1

SARTORIAL
CHOICE



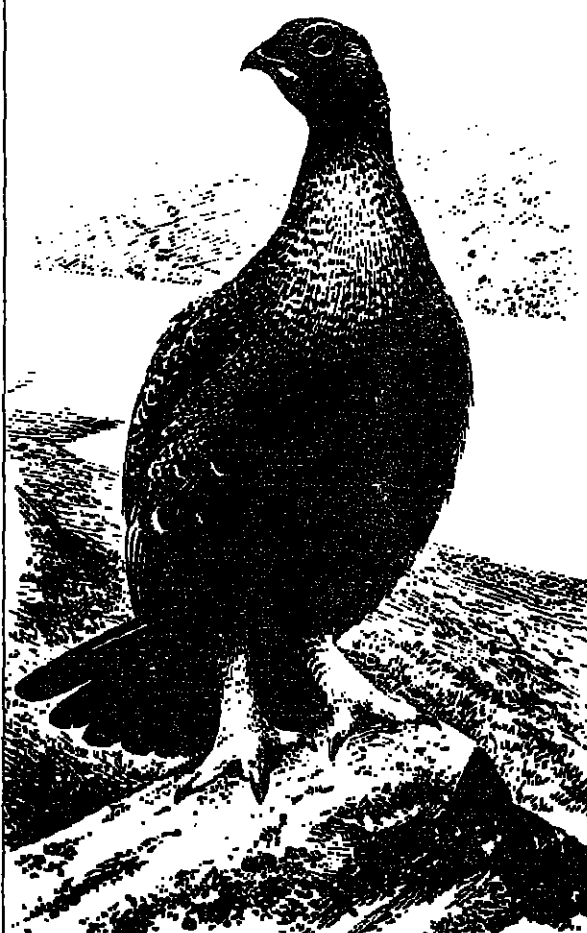
Alice Thomson takes a look at what the well-dressed candidate is wearing Life & Times, page 5

NATION'S
CHOICE



On Thursday The Times will publish an eight-page election guide and on Saturday, a complete list of results with a full political analysis

RAISED IN THE HIGHLANDS



THE
FAMOUS GROUSE
FINEST SCOTCH WHISKY

QUALITY IN AN AGE OF CHANGE

Lights, action, it's Gorbachev the movie star

FROM WILLIAM CASH IN LOS ANGELES



Gorbachev: no stranger to the camera

MIKHAIL Gorbachev's choice of Los Angeles as the first stop of his American tour early next month has raised speculation in Hollywood that the former Soviet president has plans to develop his new career as a movie star.

The entertainment trade newspaper, Variety, last week reported that Mr Gorbachev appears in a small but crucial part in Wim Wenders's *In the Company of Men*. The film, starring Bruno Ganz, the hero continues his Dante-style role as an angel who lands on Earth, as in *Wings* - only this time he meets his saviour, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mr Gorbachev, who is understood to have seen *Wings* on video and is a fan of Wenders's work, decided to pursue his new screen role during a visit to Ger-

many last month. Originally Wenders had intended to have Mr Gorbachev declaim text adapted from his best-selling autobiography.

No stranger to the camera, or the demands of professional acting, the former president disposed of the written script and improvised the footage in just four takes. However, his melancholic outpourings on the "meaning of life" and his "relationship with Fyodor Dostoevsky", shot in a Munich hotel, could also mark his debut in Pseudo-Corner. Wenders, in a written statement, applauded Mr Gorbachev for his "superior professionalism".

Although Mr Gorbachev's fee for the film has not been disclosed, agents and publishers in Tinseltown are lining up to sign the former president. A spokesman for one of the best known theatrical agencies said: "With the right sort of marketing, Gorbachev could become an extremely hot property - he could earn

even more from films than touring on the \$30,000-a-night lecture circuit.

The focus of the visit by Mr Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, to Los Angeles will be a reunion of former presidents. On Sunday, May 3, the Gorbachevs will be guests of honour at the Reagan's Rancho del Cielo in Santa Barbara, California. Ronald Reagan said last week: "I have long hoped to show Mikhail the true American West. He has heard me speak of its beauty for many years. I look forward to taking him to the ranch that is so dear to Nancy and me."

The visit will also mark the official opening of the Ronald Reagan Centre for Public Affairs based at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley - close to the favoured location of hundreds of Hollywood Westerns in the 1940s and 1950s. Mr Gorbachev is to receive the first "Ronald Reagan Freedom Award".

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Housing scheme for mentally ill held up by funding dispute

BY LOUISE HIDALGO

BUREAUCRATIC and financial wrangling has delayed part of the initiative to provide permanent housing for mentally ill people living rough in London.

More than 750 sheltered units are planned in London under the health department scheme, first announced two years ago by Stephen Dorrell, the junior health minister. The scheme is due to cost more than £20 million after fresh funds were pledged in January. A quarter were expected to open by the end of last month, but building has yet to begin because of disagreement over funding of

the management and care costs involved in running the homes.

An umbrella group representing the homeless and mentally ill, and involving Mind and Shelter, has said that, unless funding for the running costs is agreed, most of the 1,100 homeless in London requiring psychiatric care will not be housed.

The Housing Corporation, which regulates London housing associations, has agreed to fund the building of the new units, intended for people ready to move out of specialist short-term hostels. But it has refused to begin

work because of the uncertainty over running costs, the umbrella group says.

The corporation is understood to have asked the environment department, which funds it, to intervene to resolve the deadlock.

Health department officials, however, say that there is nothing to resolve and the running costs were always intended to be the responsibility of local authorities in the capital. A spokesman said that it was up to the authorities and the corporation to sort out the situation.

Local authorities have said that they cannot meet the extra costs, which the health department wants to come out of their own budgets, combined with a grant awarded last year for dealing with the mentally ill in their boroughs.

The environment department said yesterday that there had been a meeting between officials to discuss funding two weeks ago, where it had been agreed that the health department would be responsible.

Within the Housing Corporation, there seems to be disagreement about how to proceed. One source said that the scheme should not go ahead until the funding for running costs was agreed. Another claimed that building would start soon, with or without the funding issue resolved.

Sheila McKechie, director of Shelter, said that the continuing wrangling could jeopardise the scheme. The aim is that, by August, London's homeless should be covered by four teams of mental health outreach workers and have six short-term hostels. If the permanent flats, supported by psychiatric workers, were not running soon, Shelter said, those hostels would be filled and people would end up back on the streets.

"It is scandalous that, almost two years after the initiative was announced, not one unit has even got the go-ahead for development," Ms McKechie said.

Two specialist housing projects, providing temporary accommodation and care, have opened under the scheme, with places for a total of 31 people. More are being set up by the St Mungo's and Community housing associations.

DIY work leaves a semi shored up

BY JENNY KNIGHT

A BUILDER'S attempt to demolish his three bedroom semi-detached house and replace it with a five-bedroom house has ended disastrously.

Mick Maguire has been left with a pile of rubble and a lot of bad feeling in the neighbourhood after his attempt at do-it-yourself demolition brought his immediate neighbour's house to the verge of collapse. Then, Mr Maguire, aged 37, was told that planners would not approve a bigger home on the site.

The neighbour, Alan Cox, was astonished when Mr Maguire began tearing down his half of their pair of houses in Perry Barr, Birmingham, and then returned with a JCB digger to finish the job.

Mr Maguire, who is self-employed, made good progress with reducing his house to rubble, but council workmen had to shore up Mr Cox's property. Mr Cox said: "It has been a nightmare, and we've had it up to here. On one occasion Mr Maguire ran a JCB through the house to demolish it and punctured a sewage pipe... We even had a hole put in our bedroom wall which we had to have repaired under our insurance."

Paul Brown, a Birmingham city council surveyor, said that Mr Maguire, who lives in another house in the same road, had no planning permission when he began demolition.

"We were called in under dangerous-structure legislation and discovered that Mr Maguire had demolished his property, leaving the adjoining party wall standing without any safety restraint," Mr Brown said. "I don't think I've ever seen anything quite so unusual."

Mr Maguire's wife, Anne, said: "We've been upset by all this, too. They're making Mick out to be a right nuisance, but we tried to do everything by the book. We were told we didn't need planning permission. This is doing nothing for my husband's business. My husband took the house down with his hands — we only used the JCB to move the rubble."

Neighbours who organised a petition against a new house say that Mr Maguire had planned to return to Ireland and let the new house to students, but Mrs Maguire denies this.

Cuts force charity to sack half its staff

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

A LEADING charity working with the poor in the North of England has been forced to dismiss nearly half of its staff because of funding cuts.

The Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Service has lost more than £150,000 in local authority funding over the last three years, a cut of 50 per cent. Grant-funded staff have been cut from 15 to six. Two projects set up by the voluntary service council have closed this year.

The charity, which provides information and training for ethnic minorities, the elderly, the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups has no guarantee of further funding. Judy Robinson, general secretary, said: "We will try to raise extra cash but that is difficult because everybody else is doing that."

The charity is funded by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, which had been planning to reduce its grant to £98,000 this year. The association recently restored £50,000 after a campaign supported by the Labour MP David Blunkett.

The organisation is one of many voluntary groups facing closure because of cuts in local authority spending, according to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

National library rations flow of Joycean secrets

BY MATTHEW D'ANCONA

JOYCEAN scholarship enjoyed a day of mixed fortunes yesterday as the National Library of Ireland, Dublin, released a selection of James Joyce's papers after a 50-year embargo but pledged to keep some documents under wraps until December 2050.

More than 200 letters from Joyce to Paul Leon, his secretary, were made public for the first time since Leon deposited the papers with the Irish minister in Paris, shortly after the author's flight from the city in 1940. Leon was subsequently executed.

Albert Reynolds, the Irish prime minister, speaking at a ceremony attended by Joyce's grandson, Stephen, said that the papers were a "treasure house of new Joyce material and a priceless addition to our knowledge".

Of the 2,400 documents released yesterday, 240 are letters by Joyce. The new papers, largely connected with personal and business affairs, shed light on negotiations that led to the publication of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, their author's concern with censorship and his relationship with



Stephen Joyce: concerned for family's privacy

his patron, Harriet Weaver. But academic speculation is more likely to focus on the papers which have been withheld from public scrutiny at the request of Joyce's family.

Catherine Fahy, a librarian at the National Library, said that there was little of literary interest in the documents unveiled yesterday. "We have embargoed the release of some papers until the year 2050 at the request of Stephen Joyce."

The embargoed letters, about a dozen in number, are believed to be of a personal nature. Stephen Joyce is

known to be sensitive about his family's privacy and in 1988 announced that he had destroyed love letters between his grandparents.

Joyce enthusiasts expecting insights into the author's relationship with Samuel Beckett, who accompanied him to Vichy when he left Paris, will be disappointed by the new papers, which suggest only that some of his associates could not master the future Nobel laureate's name. Beckett is referred to variously in the correspondence as "Mr Beckett", "Fan Beckett" and "Sean Beckett".

Christie's takes late delivery

BY SARAH JANE CHECKLAND, SALEROOM CORRESPONDENT

A TIMEWARP of 300 years descended yesterday on Christie's Amsterdam, where a cargo of Chinese porcelain has finally been unpacked.

The 28,000 goblets, vases and lacquerware destined for the European market sank with their ship on what is now the Vietnamese coast and were rediscovered through the chance snagging on the wreck by a fishing net.

Christie's tall Amsterdam premises were bursting with blue and white painted porcelain, now valued at at least £1.5 million, bringing to mind the East India Company warehouse that should have received the insignificantly small cargo.

Christie's hopes to spark a craze in which walls and mantelpieces are enhanced with porcelain produced originally for display rather than use. Yesterday a solemn delegation of six from the communist Vietnamese government, which spotted an enterprising means of making hard cash, mingled with the crowds.

Chiltern line tops BR efficiency table

BY DOUGLAS BROOM

THE refurbished Chiltern line from Marylebone to Banbury, which until two years ago was a byword for inefficiency, has emerged top of British Rail's internal performance league. During evening peak hours in the week ending March 20, every train on the line arrived at its destination within the five minutes of the scheduled target set by the passenger's charter.

For the whole of March, 94.3 per cent of trains ran on time, significantly higher than the 88 per cent target set for it in the charter. During morning peak hours, 88.2 per cent of trains arrived on time, 95.2 per cent arrived within five minutes of scheduled time and only 1.1 per cent were cancelled. In the evening rush hours in March, 89.5 per cent were on time, 96.2 per cent within five minutes and 0.4 per cent were cancelled.

Richard Fearn, director of the Thames and Chiltern division of Network SouthEast, said that the performance had been achieved in spite of the line lacking its full complement of new Network Turbo trains.

The line, refurbished at a cost of £75 million, is the flagship of Network SouthEast's modernisation drive and is the proving ground for the Networker trains which will become the standard rolling stock for the region into the next century. Only 30 of the line's 39 two-coach and three-coach trains have so far been delivered and Mr Fearn said that he expected punctuality to improve when the full number came into service in May.

The new trains were due to enter service last May, but late deliveries by BREL, the privatised train builder, meant that their introduction was delayed until January. Until the refurbishment, the line was renowned for its inefficiency, with regular breakdowns of the 30-year-old fleet of diesel trains, late running and cancellations.

British Rail originally planned to close Marylebone and turn it into a coach park. Mr Fearn said: "We are very proud of the fact that we have turned this line round in such a short time from being the pits to being the best on the network."

Lawyers attack scandal of police cells

The number of unconvicted prisoners held in police cells, which has risen by half since January, is "scandalous", a report by the Law Society says today (Frances Gibb writes).

Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, has already described the numbers on January 30 as "unacceptable", the society says. Yet since then they had risen 50 per cent to 1,540, the highest total for more than six months and nearly double the average daily total last year.

Roger Ede, secretary of the Law Society's criminal law committee, said: "The cost of keeping prisoners in police cells in 1991 is estimated to be £88 million. This is £68 million more than it would have cost to keep them in prison, likely to rise in 1992 to more than £100 million."

The prisoners, who are on remand and therefore presumed innocent, were held in "squalid and humiliating conditions, worse than those of sentenced prisoners". Despite a call in January on the government by a joint group of police, prison, magistrates' courts and probation associations, lawyers and doctors, for action to end the holding of such prisoners in police cells, the situation had worsened, he said.

Rail drivers to beat pilot pay

British Rail drivers working on the Channel tunnel line are to earn up to £24,000 a year, making them better paid than some airline pilots. Eleven recruits are being trained, and another 85, with five years' experience, are being sought.

Len Muir, of European Passenger Services, set up by British Rail for the tunnel link, said: "We are offering conditions and work that will be the *crème de la crème*. Balpa, the airline union, said that the maximum pay for many turboprop pilots was £23,500 after 11 years."

Chat silenced

Chatlines face disconnection at noon today after their failure to raise £660,000 for a fund aimed at compensating telephone owners struggling with huge bills after their lines have been used without their permission. Since the OfTel deadline was issued a month ago, a modest contribution has been made by only one chatline company. A few chatlines have already stopped operating.

Cave rescue

An injured caver was hauled up from 150ft underground by ropes and pulleys after he fell and broke his leg. The man, in his forties and from the West Midlands, was with three others when he slipped in caves at Joyford, Gloucestershire. Two of the men climbed to the surface to raise the alarm. The injured man was detained in hospital.

Crossword finalists go through

BY JOHN GRANT, CROSSWORD EDITOR

A PART-TIME school secretary from New Barnet, north London, was champion solver at the London 8 a.m. crossword final of *The Times* InterCity crossword championship at the Park Lane Hilton yesterday.

Anne Bradford, aged 61, compiler of the *Longman Crossword Solvers' Dictionary*, completed the four puzzles in an average of 12 minutes each. Only three of the 272 competitors completed all four puzzles correctly.

Peter Biddlecombe, aged 31, a computer programmer from Palmers Green, north London, and Derek Jervis, aged 65, a teacher from Barnet, came second and third. Brian Sylvester, aged 59, a stamp dealer from Maidenhead, Berkshire, and Roy Dean, aged 65, a writer and broadcaster from Bromley, southeast London, also qualified.

Five qualifiers at the London A final on Saturday join them at the national final at the Hilton on July 26: winner Neil McHale, aged 35, from High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire; David Clarke, aged 41, from Isleworth, west London; David Burn, aged 35, from Putney, southwest London; Alastair Bruce, aged 44, from Barnes, southwest London and Alan Mills, aged 40, from Putney.

Crossword, page 20

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE

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(Charity Reg. No. 23125)

An Easter Message

During the long winter the comfort you gave our gravely ill patients was unforgettable. We thank you on their silent behalf.

As the pulse of another spring quickens to echo the Resurrection, we warmly wish you a happy and hopeful Easter.

Sister Superior.

All-singing, all-dancing shows set all-black record

WITH the opening of *Sikulu* at the Queen's tomorrow, West End theatres will have an unprecedented number of all-black shows, with up to 135 performers.

Already running are the award-winning *Five Guys Named Moe* at the Lyric, Turnstyle's production of *Carmen Jones* at the Old Vic which has been nominated for seven Olivier Awards, and *The Cotton Club*, based on the black New York night club of the 1930s, which opened at the Aldwych in January.

Sikulu is an African song and dance production by the creators of *Ipi Tombi* which was an acclaimed box office success in London, running for two years in the 1970s. The new show has a cast of 33

black South Africans telling the story of a young Zulu warrior who leaves his village to find his father in Johannesburg. It has toured in Italy, Ireland, The Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, France, Belgium, Spain and Germany since opening in South Africa in 1990.

Roger Filer, chief executive of Stoll Moss Theatres at whose Queen's theatre *Sikulu* will open, was smitten by it when he saw the show in Dublin. "It has all the effervescence and vitality of *Ipi Tombi* and we have enormous hopes for it," *Carmen Jones*, directed by Simon Callow, signalled the Old Vic's move away from being a producing house after the departure of Jonathan Miller as artistic

director. The theatre has been in financial difficulty, but the musical's run of over a year has brought solvency and, with a new cast, it is booking now until the end of July.

"We are getting two thirds capacity over a week, which means full houses on Thursday, Friday and Saturday," Andrew Leigh, the Old Vic's administrator, said. "I believe we have found a new audience — it is immediately discernible by the

number of black faces, and it has been a delightful discovery."

Integrated casting is a policy of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, where the use of black actors in the 18th century George Farquhar play, *The Recruiting Officer*, baffled some members of the audience. The policy is in line with Equity's guidance, drawn up last November, for aiming at fully integrated casts by choosing performers on ability regardless of racial appearance.

"We're very happy that black performers are getting work in the West End, but the *Sikulu* cast are South Africans, and we are concerned for black British artists," Peter Finch, deputy general secre-

tary of Equity, said. "They have a ten-week agreement and we would hope that if the show goes on after that some of the cast might be replaced by British performers."

Talawa Theatre is a black ensemble dedicated to serious black theatre but made a surprise success with a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with an all-black cast. In December it took over the Cocker Theatre, Holborn, as the country's first purpose-built black theatre. Yvonne Webster, Talawa's artistic director does not believe that the success of black musicals is necessarily good for black theatre. "It's the old American thing — entertainment for white people," she said.

Handwritten signature or mark.

Driver ignored the warning lights and swerved round safety barrier, witnesses say

Three killed as train hits car on crossing

By RAY CLANCY

TWO sisters and a man died when their car was hit by a train on an unmanned level crossing at the weekend. Two others were seriously injured.

Witnesses said the driver apparently ignored red warning lights and swerved round a lowered half-barrier. The dead were Marie Garbutt, aged 26, her sister Louise, aged 21, and Neville Swales, aged 27.

The women's brother Peter Garbutt, aged 26, and Trevor Turner, aged 22, were seriously injured when the car in which the five were travelling was hit by a train at Moorlands, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire, on Saturday. The two injured men

were last night in a stable condition in the intensive care unit of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. All five were from Moorlands and had known each other since childhood.

Their car, a Ford Capri, was hit by the 11.46 Goole to Doncaster train and shunted 60 metres down the line, rolling over several times. Those who died were all thrown from the vehicle. The survivors were trapped in the wreckage and cut free by firefighters.

Olive Davis, a resident of the village who saw the accident, said that double barriers would have prevented it happening. "We saw the train was coming when the car appeared and swerved around the barriers, which was down," she said. "I have seen other drivers go round the barriers in the past."

An examination of the crossing showed that the barriers, warning signals and lights had been working normally. There has been a history of people using the gaps in the barriers, left to prevent anyone being trapped across the railway tracks, to zig-zag over the crossing in spite of warning lights.

British Rail inspectors are investigating the accident, the fifth this year at unmanned level crossings. Concern was voiced about half barriers last month when a father and his son, aged four, were killed and five members of their family injured when their van was hit by a train at Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire.

British Rail is convinced that half-barrier unmanned level crossings are safe. "These sort of barriers are much safer than the old style manned barriers because there is no chance of human error. Obviously we are relying on people's good sense to use the barriers properly," a spokesman said. British Rail installs barriers according to criteria

laid down by the transport department.

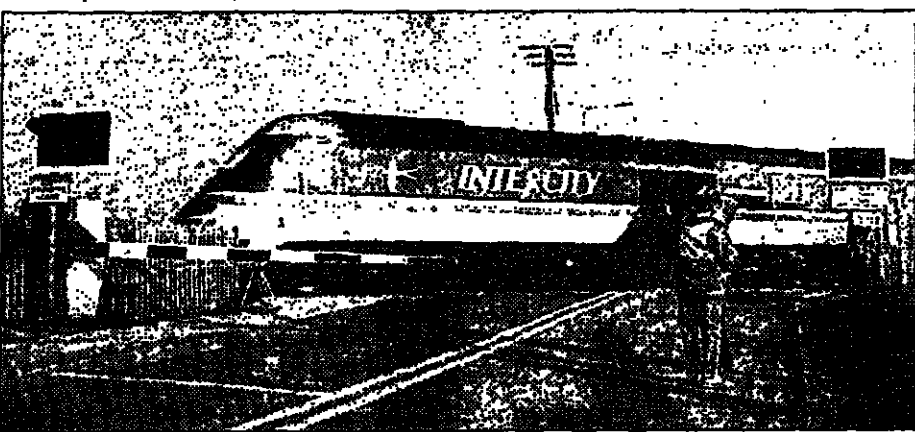
A survey of the number of trains using a particular line, their speed and frequency is carried out. The number of vehicles using a crossing is also examined. If British Rail inspectors voice concern about safety, a review is undertaken.

A Whitehall source said: "The number of accidents is causing concern. It may be the number of trains using a line has increased or the amount of road vehicles using a crossing has risen. That could lead to a change in the type of crossing at a particular location. In general terms there is pressure for half barriers to be replaced with double ones in areas where use has increased."

Half barriers are more common than more expensive double barriers. Generally double barriers are found where busy roads cross fast sections of track and in towns and cities.

Pressure for double barriers to be increased could be resisted on safety grounds. British Rail is looking at France, where SNCF, the national rail concern, is considering replacing double barriers with half barriers because of the increasing number of accidents where vehicles cross through one side of a double barrier but find the opposite side is down. They cannot reverse because the barrier behind has also come down leaving the vehicle trapped.

The transport department said it would wait for the result of the BR enquiry into the latest accident before making any decision whether to review the criteria. The most recent figures show that in 1990 23 people died and 23 were injured in 69 level crossing accidents. In most cases trains are not derailed and passengers are not hurt.



Crash wreckage: the car, top, which was shunted 60 metres down the track after being hit by a Goole to Doncaster InterCity train, bottom

Climbers survive 500ft fall unscathed

By KERRY GILL

TWO English climbers did the only sensible thing after falling 500ft down a mountain in the Cairngorms: they nipped along to the nearest telephone box and told the police.

Richard Hartshorn and Trevor Cousins suffered no more than minor cuts and bruises and some dizziness after they fell off a ridge on The Runtell, an ice-climbing peak on Cairn Gorm, into an embankment covered in soft snow. After picking themselves up, they set off to raise the alarm at a ski car park about two miles away, and 700ft below. They were helped by other climbers who came across them on their way to the telephone box.

Sergeant John Grierson, of Aviemore police, recalled a similar case last year when a climber fell several hundred feet in the same area and survived. "It must be a very lucky spot," he said.

Mr Hartshorn, aged 30, of Newcastle upon Tyne, and Mr Cousins, aged 27, of Sherburn, Co Durham, were picked up by a helicopter scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth. They were taken to the Aviemore medical centre where they were found to have no serious injury. They spent the night camping before making their way home yesterday.

Sergeant Grierson, who met them at the ski centre, said: "They were in good spirits and knew they had had a lucky escape. I would say they are extremely fortunate to be alive. If you fell 5ft in that area, you would be lucky to come away with the injuries they did."

Two men missing on Ben Nevis were rescued yesterday after climbers with a portable telephone reported their location to police. The missing men, both English, had been trapped on the Hadrian's Wall rockface, which leads to the summit, for almost 24 hours. They were uninjured.

BA pushes for better customer service

All British Airways staff are being ordered back to the classroom to learn how to improve customer service (Harvey Elliott writes).

Courses begin today and it is expected to take two years before all 49,000 staff, from senior managers to clerical staff from around the world, have taken part. BA set up the courses because research showed that rival airlines, particularly American operators, were matching its standard of in-flight service after copying the company's Putting People First campaign, launched ten years ago.

John Watson, the company's human resources director, said: "Now we have won customers we must ensure we keep them. The secret is in operating outside the box and using initiative while not throwing out company procedures altogether." Actors will feature in video films recreating difficulties encountered by staff.

Girl injured

A girl aged nine suffered multiple head injuries when she was hit by a wheel that flew off a stock-car at a race meeting at Wisbech stadium in Cambridgeshire. The wheel bounced over the crash barriers before striking Charlotte Kingston, who lives in the nearby village of Coates. Last night she was in a stable but critical condition in hospital at King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Howard rallies

Frankie Howard is continuing to improve in spite of having "severe impairment of the functioning of the heart", according to the Harley Street Clinic, London, where the comedian, aged 70, is being treated. Peter Goddard, the clinic's director of operations, said yesterday: "He is sitting up in bed and joking... enjoying the hundreds of messages he has received from well-wishers."

Police blamed

Edward Daly, the Bishop of Londonderry, said at the funeral of a Catholic man killed by loyalist gunmen in Northern Ireland that police harassment had been a factor in the murder. Dr Daly said that there was clear evidence that Danny Cassidy, aged 42, had suffered "constant, cruel and public harassment and humiliation from some units of the police" and this had put his life in danger.

Joyriding case

Four youths aged 17 to 22 will appear at Steyning magistrates court in West Sussex on May 6 in the first case under the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1992, introduced in response to concern over joyriding.

Firebomb man keeps up jail fast

By A STAFF REPORTER

A TAMIL prisoner convicted of murder was continuing his hunger strike last night despite a decision by the Home Secretary, the home secretary, to allow an independent enquiry into his case.

Sam Kulasingham, aged 35, is critically ill in Hammersmith hospital, west London. He started his fast 55 days ago and has always maintained his innocence. He was convicted four years ago on a majority verdict of a firebomb attack on a house in east London in which three men died.

Another man, Prem Sivalingham, was also convicted but three others were discharged after the judge ruled there was no case against them. Kulasingham's appeal was dismissed on February 11 and he immediately began his fast.

Last week the Metropolitan police carried out initial enquiries into claims of new evidence. On Saturday, Mr Baker ordered a full enquiry. John Smith, deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan police, then asked Chief Supt Keith Southgate, of Essex police, to carry out the investigation.

The new evidence is understood to point to a conspiracy against Kulasingham, who was sentenced to life imprisonment. At his trial in 1988 the prosecution said that the firebombing was the result of gang warfare involving two groups of Tamils. New statements from Tamils appear to indicate that two men who had shared a house with Kulasingham were put under pressure to incriminate him.

Veteran tenor bridges the generation gap 30 years on



Locke: "At my age! I'm flabbergasted!"

THE legendary Irish tenor Joe Locke, whose velvet voice and eye for the ladies made him the Tom Jones of post-war Britain, has become the oldest singer to break into the Top Ten at the age of 75.

Today Mr Locke, whose compilation of old 78s was recorded for EMI in the decade from 1947, will celebrate his entry in the best-selling album charts with his usual three pints of Guinness in a corner of a smoky pub in the wilds of Co Kildare.

At his home in the village of Clane yesterday he said: "It's unbelievable, that's the only way I can describe it. I'm flabbergasted. At my age! Even Frank Sinatra would be pleased with

A post-war Irish tenor is challenging the giants of pop, reports Michael Horsnell

that, wouldn't he?" The CD and cassette album *Hear My Song: The Best of Joe Locke*, featuring *I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen*, *Count Your Blessings* and *Hear My Song Violette*, is proving to be unexpected competition for the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Simply Red, Madness and Wet Wet Wet.

Mr Locke, who says he will not be tempted out of retirement by the offer of lucrative concerts at Carn-

egie Hall, New York, and the Festival Hall, London, is nevertheless planning to record a new 'single' and make the occasional appearance. His re-emergence into the limelight follows the release of the film about his life *Hear My Song* starring Ned Beatty, in the United States, where it was praised by Madonna, and in London.

Mr Locke was feted last month at the British premiere where he sang *Danny Boy* before the Princess of Wales, the song he performed at a Royal Command Performance in 1952, before he was whisked away by Michael Aspel to appear in *This Is Your Life*. Devotees of the former Irish Guardsman, who was earning

£2,000 a week in his heyday before fleeing home to Ireland from the taxman after a demand for £17,000 in 1958, say his voice is as strong as ever.

Mr Locke said that he sat at the piano half-an-hour a day. "Maybe the top mezzo voice notes may not be quite what they were but everything else is working well and I still love singing. But success doesn't tempt me to come out of retirement, I don't like living out of a suitcase."

Mr Locke is to be presented with a silver disc for selling 60,000 copies of *Hear My Song*. EMI is to release two of his songs on a 78 rpm, believed to be the first 12in record of its kind produced in over 30 years.

Jilly Cooper's Word Processor?

We'd love to think that Jilly Cooper, one of the country's top selling novelists, uses a Psion Series 3. Truth is, it's so new, we doubt if she's even seen it yet. And it is so amazingly advanced, neither Jilly nor you will have seen anything like it before. Ever.

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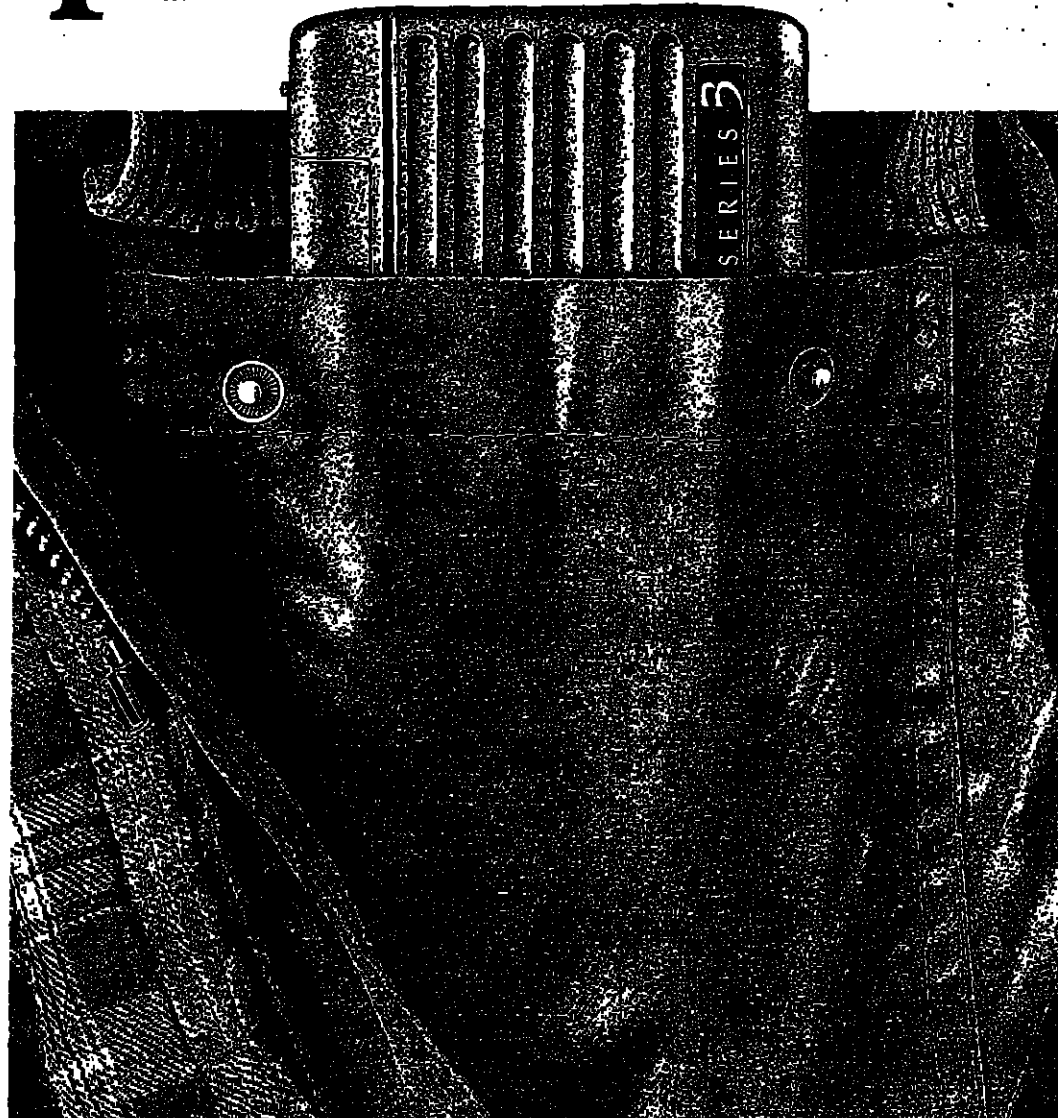
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Debt-ridden students borrow more as jobs vanish

BY MATTHEW D'ANCONA, EDUCATION REPORTER

STUDENTS are being forced to take out loans by the pressure of personal debt and the scarcity of holiday work, according to a survey published today by the National Union of Students.

The loan system was introduced to offset the impact of inflation, the withdrawal of benefits from students, and the freezing of the grant in 1990. The report suggests that many students are taking up loans as a panic measure to stave off debt.

Of those who intended to take out a loan last October, a third reported debts of more than £500 and 15 per cent owed more than £1,000. Only 18 per cent of those without debts planned to make use of the loan system. However, 86 per cent of those who owed between £500 and £1,000 said that they would need a loan. The maximum available last year was £660 in London and £580 elsewhere, and increased by 25 per cent last month.

Stephen Twigg, president of the union, said: "This shows once and for all that student loans are not increasing in popularity. The increased uptake is purely the result of desperation on the part of students who have less and less to live on. They need a grant that increases in line with the cost of living."

Sixty-two per cent of the

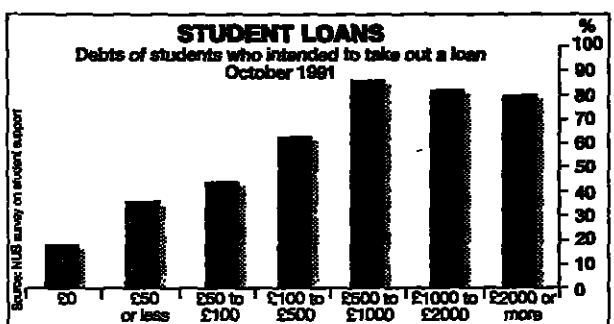
2,300 students replying to the survey were in debt by the end of the academic year 1990-1. Twenty-seven per cent had debts of more than £500, while 11 per cent owed more than £1,000.

The level of debt among students dropped only marginally over the summer, reflecting the decline in readily available holiday work, the report says. More than a third were unemployed last summer and, in some areas, such as Scotland, Wales and the West Midlands, the proportion of students finding work was 3 per cent or less.

Those who found jobs were paid an average of £3.63 an hour, or £90 a week, for nine weeks during the 14-week vacation. Thirty-six per cent of respondents said that they had worked during term time, an increase of 12 per cent since 1989-90.

The survey is likely to fuel debate about the level of financial support available to students. Angela Crum Ewing, president of the Association of University Teachers, said that the new findings were shocking. "Students have never had a cushy time, but now they face hardship on an appalling scale. Study should be the priority, not a struggle for survival."

Education Times L&T section, page 7



Special delivery: Val Cooper, who was named *Midwife of the Year* yesterday, plays in Hyde Park with Imogen Robertson, aged 15 months, whom she helped to deliver. Mrs Cooper was nominated for the award by Imogen's mother Deborah, of Rochester, Kent. She said: "I was going to have the baby at home, but there were complications, and she arranged for me to go to hospital, and stayed with me through to the end of a very long day - 17 hours - without any thought of going off duty." Mrs Cooper, aged 41, of Rainham, Kent, has delivered more than 800 babies over 25 years, including one by torchlight after a hospital power cut and a generator failure. She wins £1,000 for herself and £250 for Rochester health centre, where she is based. The award was made in London by *Maternity & Mothercraft* magazine and the baby products company Griptight, in association with the Royal College of Midwives.

MI5 vies with police for anti-IRA operations

A HOME Office report on the future of intelligence gathering against terrorism goes to Downing Street on Thursday amid speculation in the intelligence community that MI5 could take over the work of the police.

The report has been drawn up by the civil servant heading the Home Office's police department, which encompasses the security service and the police. The report follows nearly four months of negotiations and lobbying.

Scotland Yard is fighting to maintain historic control of gathering information and organising operations against domestic terrorism,

much of which is concerned with the IRA. The Yard's special branch was set up over a hundred years ago to combat the Fenians.

For its part, the security service has been trying to find new roles for its manpower since the collapse of the communist bloc. Like many intelligence services around the world, its officers are turning towards areas such as terrorism or, one day perhaps, drugs trafficking.

Scotland Yard has been supported by chief constables while MI5 is thought to have the tacit support of the Ministry of Defence. Stella Rimington, the new director

Who should control the anti-terrorist fight? The Home Office may propose changes, reports Stewart Tendler

general of MI5, could also lobby within Downing Street and the Cabinet Office because her service reports directly to the prime minister.

If MI5 wins the argument, its London offices would become the clearing house for anti-terrorist intelligence, making use of the service's skills of threat assessment and strategy developed in the

past 70 years against the Nazis and the Eastern bloc. MI5 has considerable expertise in running double agents and penetrating enemy organisations. The change will be tempting to politicians who feel that new measures are needed to fight a reorganised IRA, which has run a successful mainland campaign for three years.

The police argue that MI5 is publicly unaccountable and does not understand the demands of courts for background evidence. Officers say courts are increasingly supporting defence arguments for the disclosure of evidence, which could include electronic

surveillance and intelligence material. MI5 does now have a role in Ulster but the RUC and the army do most of the intelligence gathering. The possibility of giving the task to MI5 has been promoted by the argument that the fight against the IRA should be more co-ordinated by a central authority rather than one police force.

The police could argue that forces have worked much more closely in recent years than in the past. Critics of the police have sometimes accused them of relying on crude strategies rather than sophisticated analysis.

Daffodils prove too plentiful

The town of Abergavenny in Gwent has upset bureaucrats at the Welsh Office by planting too many daffodils.

Thousands of the flowers adorn Hardwick roundabout at Abergavenny, known as the Gateway to Wales. They have been planted there to help to attract tourists.

Hugh Candler, chairman of the town's In Bloom committee, said he was astounded at being told by a Welsh Office representative on a site visit that there needed to be more wild flowers and shrubs. "He said there were too many daffodils in Wales."

Damp squib

Naval security officers are examining secret Russian military papers found washed ashore in an explosive briefcase by a man walking his dog near Newport, Dyfed. Devices inside failed to detonate when Tony Beer, of Fishguard, kicked the case open.

Family acts

Relatives of Albert Dryden, jailed for murdering a council official supervising the demolition of his bungalow in Co Durham, have begun to pull down the building.

Husband freed

Police investigating the murder of Jacqueline Palmer, whose body was found last week by her son at their home in Eversley, Hampshire, have released without charge her estranged husband, Werner.

Whale death

National History Museum staff are to carry out an autopsy on a minke whale washed ashore at Musselburgh, Lothian.

Light of life

Reflectors have been fitted on the A380 Exeter to Torquay road to deter deer at night.

Bond winners

The weekly premium bond winners are: £100,000, number 34BS 977956, winner lives in Islington, London. (value of holding £3,200); £50,000, 35TL 147007, Staffordshire (£10,000); £25,000, 26DN 926584, Lambeth, London (£10,000).

Even if you think a metronome would travel half price on the French underground, you'll still enjoy the BBC Young Musician of the Year Finals.

You don't need to find a babysitter. There's no need for a last minute dash to Sketchley's with the DJ. No obligation to buy expensive concert programmes.

Because tonight you can have the best seats in the house for the Finals. Simply tune into BBC 2 at 7.30pm, where you'll see the Final for Piano.

It's followed on consecutive evenings by those for Wind, Brass and Strings. The winners of each individual class will then take part in the climax of the Lloyds Bank sponsored competition: the Concerto Final. That too will be televised next Saturday. And once again all the seats are free.



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Defence ministry studies contract bids

Private schools to train military pilots

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

ELEMENTARY flying training for RAF and Royal Navy recruits is to be privatised. Bids by commercial companies are being studied, a spokesman for the Ministry of Defence confirmed yesterday.

Recruits, some without any previous air experience, are at present given a flying course in Chipmunk and Bulldog light aircraft before progressing to basic training as military pilots, using turbo-prop Tucano trainers. The navy's elementary flying training is carried out at Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire, and the RAF's school is at Swindon, Wiltshire.

The ministry believes that this first layer of training can be performed more cost-effectively by commercial flying schools. The contract will be worth several million pounds.

The Oxford air training school, the largest private flying organisation in the country, and two other commercial schools, one in Prestwick,

near Ayr, the other in Perth, are known to have put forward bids. The ministry requested tenders earlier this year and bids had to be in by the end of February.

The elementary flying course at Swindon consists of 63 flying hours in a Chipmunk. Any RAF recruit who has flown fewer than 60 hours has to go through the course. Graduates, who usually fly about 100 hours in the university air squadrons, go directly into basic training with Tucanos. Navy trainee pilots fly in Bulldogs. Their course is administered by the air force.

The new move is part of the ministry's programme to introduce better value for money in the armed forces' support services. Naval target towing, in which targets are pulled along by aircraft to be shot down by warships, is already carried out by a commercial company.

An increase in privatised services is expected after the

appointment of Christopher Littmoden, finance director of Marks & Spencer, as a part-time adviser at the ministry. He has been asked to examine which other services might be run more effectively by private companies. Mr Littmoden, who has just taken up his new duties, is expected to stay at the ministry for about six months, working two days a week.

The 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards have paid a farewell visit to the town where the regiment was founded more than 300 years ago. It is being amalgamated under the government's army cuts with the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards to form the Royal Dragoon Guards.

Yesterday the regiment marched with fixed bayonets through Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, to lay up their colours in St Martin's cathedral. The Inniskilling Dragoons were founded in 1669 for the defence of Enniskillen against James II.

EC PRESIDENCY LOGOS



Picture puzzles: Britain's Rory leaves little to the imagination, but Luxembourg, France, The Netherlands and Portugal all appear to have resorted to mystic symbolism

Rory roars into EC office for Britain

By ALAN HAMILTON

BRITAIN assumes the presidency of the EC in July, but has already fulfilled its first obligation: the production of the obligatory logo.

Rory the Lion, chosen from numerous efforts submitted by design consultancies and named by the nine-year-old winner of a children's television competition, has cost the foreign office £15,000 to develop.

It regards the exercise as "an opportunity to convey a clear message — a strong symbol of Britain in the Community", while Douglas Hurd describes Rory as "a lively, intelligent lion at the heart of Europe".

Compared with other efforts, the British logo is a model of uncompromising clarity. The Portuguese, present holders of the presidency, produced a logo that looks suspiciously like a pre-war Volkswagen steering wheel overlaid with the collar flash of the SS.

Their London embassy explained that it was in fact an astrolobe, a navigational aid as used by explorers who ventured forth from Lisbon.

Bar urged to make payouts for negligence

In a second report on reforming the Bar's complaints system, Frances Gibb looks at the Consumers' Association case

THE Bar is coming under mounting pressure to scrap its complaints procedures and to create a new system to meet consumer needs and with powers to award compensation to aggrieved clients.

The Consumers' Association has carried out a lengthy investigation into the Bar's handling of complaints and is calling for the abolition of the "immunity rule", which protects barristers from being sued for negligence over their performance in court. The Bar's present procedures are under fire for being an internal system primarily geared to disciplining its members and failing to meet complainants' needs.

The system is criticised for what complainants see as a lack of independence: for conducting its affairs in private and giving minimum publicity to procedures or findings; and for being too limited in scope, in that only complaints which may relate to cases of professional misconduct are tackled.

There are complaints that barristers cannot be sued for negligence for work done in court, and that the Bar's disciplinary tribunal applies the criminal burden of proof — "beyond reason-

able doubt" — when dealing with complaints of bad work outside court, instead of the civil test of "on the balance of probabilities".

A draft paper drawn up by the Consumers' Association says: "The right to redress is a basic consumer principle and an effective complaints system should contribute towards giving consumers that right. No group of professionals ought to recognise this more readily than barristers, whose main purpose in life is the pursuit of redress on behalf of clients."

Anthony Smith, a lawyer with the association, said: "Some improvements have been made to the system, but these do not go far enough."

"It is still far too tied to disciplinary procedures. And when someone complains about a barrister, disciplinary action is not necessarily the right response, although that may also result. There needs to be a system where the complaint is dealt with on much more neutral territory, away from the barrister's home ground."

Of the immunity rule, he said: "What other service is given where no remedy is provided in the case of incompetent or shoddy work? A surgeon is not immune from what he does in an operation but a barrister is immune from what he does in court. What spur is there to good service?"

The association is taking a model the Solicitors' Complaints' Bureau, set up five years ago. Although funded by the Law Society, it had succeeded in establishing its independence, "judging by the hostility of solicitors to it", Mr Smith said. The association wants the Bar to publish the decisions of its hearings more widely; to produce an annual report; to publish an explanatory leaflet for complainants on how the system works; and to allow a single procedure so that it is not left to complainants to decide whether their cases amount to professional misconduct or negligence.

The Bar has already made some reforms. Complainants are now to be given reasons for the dismissal of a complaint, and they will be shown the barrister's response to their complaint. Gareth Williams, QC, Bar chairman, rejects the view that other changes, such as more publicity, are needed.

The question of the immunity rule is one for parliament, he says. "If barristers could be sued for work in court, there would be no end to litigation. Every time someone was convicted, he or she would sue counsel."

In the meantime, the Consumers' Association intends to press its case with the legal services ombudsman, Michael Barnes, whose appointment last year brought the Bar's complaints system under scrutiny for the first time.

Law Report, L&T section, page 8

When ill advice costs dear

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

DR JOHN Malin, an economist from Somerset, found himself with legal costs of about £12,000 after his barrister advised him he had a good chance of succeeding in an appeal against a pre-divorce settlement he had agreed with his former wife.

The first barrister who dealt with his case, whose written advice had been relied upon, could not attend the appeal hearing. At the last-minute conference with the replacement counsel, it turned out that the chances of success were minimal.

The judge dismissed Dr Malin's appeal and Dr Malin complained to the Bar Council. The complaint was dismissed and no evidence of professional misconduct was found.

Dr Malin then complained to the Legal Services Ombudsman, who monitors the Bar's handling of complaints. Again, the complaint was dismissed on the ground that the Bar's professional conduct committee had looked into the matter properly within its limited terms of reference.

But in his report, Michael Barnes, the ombudsman, expressed "serious" reservations about the lack of information given to Dr Malin, including the failure to give him reasons for the dismissal. Bar policy on that has now changed.

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'Family Planning.'



Car fleet directors accuse garages

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S biggest fleet companies claim they are losing millions of pounds because of overcharging by motor dealers on service and maintenance costs.

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association, which has 1,800 member companies running 1.3 million cars, says that dealers have raised maintenance costs at more than double inflation to make up losses from vehicle sales during the recession. It claims that dealers are carrying out unnecessary work so that they can charge for extra labour.

One contract hire company was sent bills for £4,000 for repairs to two Jaguars. When checked, one car needed repairs costing £100 and the other £60 worth of minor adjustments, the association says in the latest edition of its magazine. That could be down to inexperience or errors, but "the suspicion of downright fraud is difficult to avoid".

The association advises

members, who include some of Europe's biggest bulk car buyers, to study bills. Some firms have hired agents to check that garages are carrying out the correct work.

Stan Thompson, the association's treasurer and managing director of Jessops (Vehicle Contract) Ltd of Romford, Essex, says: "I feel we are being taken for a ride." He said maintenance costs had risen by about 10 per cent when inflation had fallen to below 4 per cent.

The Retail Motor Industry Federation estimates that 10 per cent of garages went out of business last year. New car sales have fallen for 29 consecutive months and servicing has declined because fewer motorists maintain their cars regularly.

David Gent, the federation's director-general, says a federation investigation found that most dealers charged fairly. "Most dealers value the business that fleet customers bring in and would not want to jeopardise that long-term relationship."



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Labour's final thrust

Kinnock promises
policies to help
economy recover

BY JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEIL Kinnock last night called on the electorate to vote for a government that would help people to raise themselves to become successful.

Surrounded by celebrities from the stage and screen, pop stars, writers and sports personalities, Mr Kinnock said a Labour government would not only lead with purpose and patriotism but would be willing to listen and to reason.

Mr Kinnock's speech set the tone for this week's campaigning, which will concentrate on Labour's plans to take Britain into recovery and to invest in the health service. Labour will appeal to floating voters and those who are now turning to the Liberal Democrats. They will emphasise that a hung parliament will only extend uncertainty and the recession.

Mr Kinnock contrasted Labour's approach with the Tory "only we know best" style of government. People had a straight choice to vote for the same or to vote for a change.

Speaking at a London reception, which was much more sober than the presidential extravaganza at Sheffield Arena, Mr Kinnock said: "We will serve all the people. And we'll do it because we believe it our primary duty to help the people to raise themselves, in the words of Archbishop Temple, 'to what they might become'."

"It is not patronising or paternalism," he said. "There is nothing of the nanny state about it. There is everything of the democratic government about it."

A Labour government would invest in people to extend their freedom to learn, to train, to choose and to make more of a success of their lives, Mr Kinnock said. That would be done through eco-

nomic and social policies and by combating unemployment. "We will add to the security of people, for it is insecurity which brings caution and stagnation and poverty of spirit and pocket."

Unemployment wasted the abilities of those out of work and eroded the confidence of those in work, prolonging recession and making recovery ever more fragile. "Indeed it is the absence of any effort by the Conservatives to tackle unemployment urgently and directly which is now the major cause of the continuation of the recession."

Mr Kinnock presented a stark choice between a Conservative government that had brought recession and a Labour government which would build recovery.

"The choice is between voting to break up and commercialise the NHS and voting to invest in and modernise the NHS. The choice is between preserving opportunity for just a few of the country's children, or investing in the lives of all of the country's children."

That was the choice between Conservatives who would continue to divide and weaken the country and a Labour government which would seek the consensus to build a confident and capable country, said Mr Kinnock.

People had had 13 years of government with the money and the majority to achieve a real advance for the economy. "And they also know to their bitter cost that they have had a government that has dissipated the riches and stained the community with division, increased poverty, insecurity, exploitation, with high unemployment and reduced opportunities."

He accused the government of being an "only we know best" government. They knew that young parents did not need nursery education for their children. They knew that children learn as well in classes of 40 as in classes of 20.

A Labour government would unlock people's potential by broadening and strengthening opportunity. "We will be making the British economy more prosperous, more competitive, able to earn the wealth that will enable us to keep on modernising the schools, improving the health service and making Britain a more creative and confident society. A country that can better help to conquer poverty, to increase liberty and to overcome oppression."

Peter Riddell, page 16
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Housing threat, page 21

Leader rallies fans,
and does it his way

JOHN Major made a very British speech yesterday. True, he left his soap box on his bus and paraded himself before the hi-tech wizardry of his octagonal travelling theatre. But as he made the most important speech of his political life there was little of the pyrotechnics of Neil Kinnock's 10,000-strong Sheffield rally.

He set the tone from the outset. He too had seen Mr Kinnock, "grinning and swaggering", as Kenneth Baker put it, before his hysterical admirers last week. "To my mind there was something very un-British about those highly organised, regimented legions of supporters," he told his audience at Wembley Conference Centre.

There was nothing regimented about Mr Major's supporters, scattered around his shadowy auditorium. Some were the foot-soldiers of the party faithful, loyal to the last. Others, in the interminable fame war waged by the two big parties, were nearly 100 celebrities drawn from the world of showbusiness, sport, the theatre, television and popular fiction.

Some of the most approving noises came as he inspected Labour's tax plans. The celebrities stand to lose a pretty penny from Mr Kinnock's ambitions, but the prime minister did not labour the matter. He contented himself with a mild reminder that Mr Kinnock would unpick "the golden tapestry of talents"

Nicholas Wood sees
John Major take
centre stage among
the spear carriers
and the stars

and drive many of the audience into tax exile.

On more than one occasion Mr Major has spoken of the importance of dignity, pointing admiringly at the way that James Callaghan conducted himself in defeat in 1979. Wembley saw another dignified performance.

Just occasionally in the almost plaintive cry for popular support the frustration of three weeks of sliding backwards showed through. Roy Hattersley had had the temerity to address his audience as "comrades" when he was off camera last week. This, Mr Major said, was evidence that Labour's deputy leader in an after good dinner speech had taken leave of his Egon Ronay.

Cerfild Kauffman, Labour's invisible man but perhaps the next foreign secretary, was again a figure of fun. "The Labour Party will not let him speak at home for all of them, but they propose to send him abroad to speak for all of us."

The celebrities loved it, but they must have loved even more the spectacle of a man straining every nerve to reach an electorate that has already begun to make for the exit. It was a wet Wednesday in Wigan all over again.



Hail the leader: Chris Patten applauds John and Norma Major on their entry into the Wembley Conference Centre

Major battles to save the union

BY NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major showed rare passion yesterday as he gave a warning of the threat to the union between Scotland and England being posed by the Scottish Nationalists, with their demand for independence, and by Labour and the Liberal Democrats with their proposals for devolution.

He said that it would be "unbelievable" to toss aside the union through which, for more than 300 years, Britain moulded world history. "If I could summon up all the authority of this office I would put it into this single warning: the United Kingdom is in danger. Wake up my fellow countrymen. Wake up now. Before it is too late," the prime minister said.

Speaking at a rally in Wembley Conference Centre, attended by 100 Tory-supporting celebrities, Mr Major conjured up some of the most vivid language of the campaign to persuade waverers back to the fold. He coupled warnings about life under Labour with a glowing picture of a Tory future.

With opinion polls suggesting the Conservatives will lose their overall majority on Thursday, he summoned up all his powers of rhetoric to warn that outright victory for Neil Kinnock or a "Lib-Lab" coalition would smash the rock of the constitution and fracture the kingdom.

"I know that over the years we in Britain have sometimes been the odd man out. But it would be more than odd. It would be stark staring mad for Britain to go back to socialism, when it's being kicked from doorstep to doorstep in almost every country."

"All the world is turning to the free enterprise policies in which we Conservatives believe. The British disease of trade union militancy is a thing of the past now. This Conservative government curbed it, then cured it. Now people in every continent are

queuing up for a dose of the British cure—low tax, deregulation, private ownership, trade union controlling policies. Will this be one more great British invention which all the world copies, while we throw away the patent?"

Mr Major said it would be folly for Britain to turn to Labour. "We could inflict this damage on ourselves. We could take that sword of socialism and fall on it. And if we did, our country would fall with it. The choice will be yours on Thursday."

"On that crucial day, we could decide that Britain will be the last refuge of a dying and discredited socialist creed. We could lurch blindly down a cul-de-sac that by the

middle of the Nineties would make Britain the last left wing country left."

Mr Major blamed the recession on world conditions and argued that it would be perverse for the nation to reject free enterprise because of a temporary downturn. "We have become used to record growth. It comes as a shock when we have to mark time. But you cannot legislate against world conditions. What you have to do is to hang in there, and be ready to be first off the blocks when the world economy begins to move once again."

The prime minister mounted a robust defence of the past 13 years of Tory rule. He said the spending power of the

average family man had risen by £68 a week in real terms and schools and hospitals had record resources.

The prime minister coupled his defence of the Tory record with a promise of renewed prosperity, schools, an expanding health service and a chance for all to own their own home. "I cannot express to you what I owe to this country and what it has done for me. If you continue to give me your trust as your prime minister, I will do all I can to repay that debt. I want to make Britain a greater, better place."

Major rally, page 1
Economic view, page 23

Ashdown admits risk to party

BY SHEILA GUNN AND JOHN WINDER

PADDY Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, admitted yesterday that he was risking the unity of his own party by sticking to his refusal to prop up a minority Labour or Conservative government unless the voting system was reformed.

He recognised divisions in his party over his tough stance on proportional representation for Westminster and conceded that there would be "difficulties and tensions" within the party in the event of a hung parliament. Speaking on LWT's *Walden* programme, he said: "If you are saying am I taking a risk with my own party in this matter, I concede it."

Later Mr Ashdown spurred his party workers in London to greater efforts in the three last days of canvassing, predicting: "This could be the beginning of the end of the depressing years of self-centred, centralised elective dictatorship. This could be the beginning of a country

where power genuinely resides with the people, where all its mechanisms are geared to unleash their potential and from where we can go on to great things in the 21st century."

With the weekend polls showing Liberal Democrat support averaging 19.3 per cent, compared with 18.1 per cent a week ago, Mr Ashdown talked of the prospect of "a significant force" in the next parliament which could act as a bridgehead for a greater advance to a Liberal Democrat government within the decade.

He added: "Every Liberal Democrat vote will give us greater authority, greater strength to control the extremes of the old parties, to force them to face the tough challenges, to make them act with commonsense and, in many, many constituencies all over this country, a Liberal Democrat vote will directly elect a Liberal Democrat MP, forming a powerful force in

the House of Commons to act for you and speak for you."

The success of the party's campaign was due, he said, to its refusal to bribe the voters and its insistence on telling voters the hard truths about what needed to be done. However, he accepted during his television interview that he could be blamed for bringing down a minority government and provoking a second election.

But he stuck by his assertion that the introduction of a PR system of voting was central to a coalition that would ensure a stable government. Without it, a minority government would bring "an economic crisis, rising interest rates and a loss of any opportunity to give this country out of recession," he said.

Challenged about signs that some senior Liberal Democrats wanted him to soften the terms for a deal in a hung parliament, Mr Ashdown insisted: "My party knows the risk we're taking."

VOX POP
by Peter BarnardSalesmen
set out
their stalls

AT THE start of this campaign, Neil Kinnock called for a television debate with John Major. He refused. Yesterday television viewers got what should have been the next best thing: all three party leaders interviewed consecutively on the same programme.

Unfortunately, the BBC's lunchtime *On The Record* programme blew it. Far from allowing the electors to do some comparison shopping, they were asked to make a choice between three shops selling three different items. Even by the arcane standards that are a curiosity of all Sunday trading, this seemed a perverse way of setting out stalls.

The interviews were pre-recorded by Jonathan Dimbleby and linked by him from outside 10 Downing Street. The BBC has a Dimbleby for every electoral occasion, and Jonathan has had a good campaign so far, both in *On The Record* and the daily *Election Call*. His brother David has been handling the big *Panorama* sepiet interviews and will lead the election-night coverage.

But yesterday's triple-header was both dull and frustrating. Even allowing for the fact that 15 minutes or so for each leader is hardly enough time to run the full gamut of policy, surely 15 minutes of Paddy Ashdown talking only about proportional representation was a bit much.

Virtually every question put to Mr Kinnock had to do with what he had and had not promised in the Labour manifesto in the context of whether these promises could be funded. This evidently frustrated him. At one point he told Mr Dimbleby: "I don't go around with the exact wording tattooed on the insides of my eyelids."

The interview with the prime minister was utterly bland. The focus was almost entirely on the allegation that the Tories do not care enough about social issues, a charge at which Mr Major threw statistics, albeit convincingly. Far too long was spent trying (and failing) to get Mr Major to say he was sorry for the poll tax, as opposed to him saying that he "regretted" it.

The winner, on points, was Mr Ashdown, but only because he has now answered every question so far invented on PR without tripping over his own feet. Mr Major came second because he was plausible. Mr Kinnock third because he sounded wobbly about the difference between a pledge and a hope based on economic performance.

A long way fourth was the viewer, who had been asked by the structure of the programme to compare apples, oranges and bananas.

Where a change of mind always means moving home

Imagine a contest in which there are no opinion polls. Picture an election in which housewives clamour to be canvassed, decking out their windows with flowers for the honour of their candidate's call, and old women run with tears in their eyes to embrace him at the garden gate. Picture a sunny Saturday, with streaks of snow on the hills behind the town. Imagine an election in which the candidates are called Fred, Joe and Gerry: a contest in which little children dance, smiling, round their favourites in the streets, pleading for stickers, chanting affectionate nicknames—names like "Husky Gerry".

Sounds idyllic, doesn't it? West Belfast, actually. Irish politics: a mixture of the folksy and the grizzly. They like country and Western music here, and murdering each other. As for husky Gerry Adams, five years of being banned by law from talking on the British media, followed by three weeks in which the ban is lifted and every microphone thrust in



CAMPAIGN SKETCH

MATTHEW PARRIS

front of him, may be what has thickened the throat.

Joe I never did meet. Everyone said how nice he was. "Oh Joe Hendron, Doctor Hendron," said a Unionist I spoke to, "people respect Joe. Even his own party likes him. Odd they didn't choose somebody stronger."

"A decent old boy," a Sinn Féin aide said, "confused, but decent. Doomed. The man who never quite made it."

Dr Hendron is the SDLP's candidate and West Belfast is one of its few winnable seats. The SDLP opposes violence and is popular among the more moderate Roman Catholics. Ulster Unionists see this moderation as a trap—republicanism with a human face. So, although they know they cannot win in West Belfast, the Unionists

are putting up against Dr Hendron. Otherwise it would have been a straight fight between the SDLP and Sinn Féin, whose leader is husky Gerry. The intervention of the Unionists slightly improves Mr Adams's chances.

But then that's how politics goes in the province. You keep your patch and I'll keep mine. West Belfast is Sinn Féin territory and Mr Adams is Sinn Féin's tribal chief. Some element, half-unconscious, in the Unionist mind would miss Gerry Adams, just as republicans would miss the Rev Ian Paisley.

But not everything in Belfast goes according to stereotype. Your sketchwriter was expecting Fred Cobain, the Unionist candidate, to be a provincial redneck and political primitive. Instead, he struck me as a thoughtful

man. He owes his life to Cilla Black. It happened some months ago...

Two gunmen walked into his sitting room while his wife was watching a bumper edition of... no, not *Surprise Surprise*, but *Blind Date*. Mr Cobain had retreated from the pap, and was sulking upstairs. Mrs Cobain told her visitors that her husband was away. They believed her and left. Sentimental souls, they assumed that if he were at home he would hardly be missing *Blind Date*. Cilla knows not what happiness she spreads. Mr Cobain carries on the fight, but with care: he does not canvass in the Catholic part of West Belfast—which is almost all of it.

So he and I were restricted to a Protestant enclave—or "oasis," as a party helper told me. "Swamp," one of Gerry Adams's people remarked. Bordered by barricades, people here tell you their views not on the bus, but on the gable ends of their houses, in paint. Lamp posts

are employed as flagpoles. "You canvass them as a courtesy," Mr Cobain said, "not to change their minds. Nobody changes his mind here. You have to change your address. Your address proclaims your mind."

In England, candidates are under the impression, at least, that they may be able to influence opinion. Here, opinion is taken as fixed and a candidate's job is to travel around shaking it by the hand, lest it stay at home on election day in a fit of pique. "They're trapped," Mr Cobain continued. "All around them is out of bounds to their kids. They feel abandoned. That's why I'm standing. I can't win, but that isn't the point."

This Unionist, who cannot win is a strong candidate and seemed to me of higher calibre than the Unionists who do win. He felt intense loyalty to his own side, and so strong a commitment to his ideal of complete integration with Great Britain that "there isn't any price that

would not be worth paying"—even, he said, English laws on homosexuality. Yet he believes that his own side will never be secure until Unionism becomes accessible to the other side too: the Catholics. In Mr Cobain's car as he took me back, the famous aria from *Madame Butterfly* was playing. She, as I recall, awaits something her audience knows will never come. Is there any more poignant spectacle than a noble, steadfast and misplaced trust?

One of Gerry Adams's team took the more worldly view. I had been keeping up with his master's messianic progress around the Turf Lodge estate that Saturday afternoon—banners, stickers, posters and happy children everywhere—an afternoon when, if you did not wish to be visited by Mr Adams, it was better to be out...

One of his followers turned to me: "Who would be a politician? It was easier when we were just bombing and shooting each other."

leet directors
use garages

RAMON MONTOR

RAMON MONTOR

RAMON MONTOR

RAMON MONTOR

RAMON MONTOR

RAMON MONTOR

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A fact not reflected in every party's official line.

Labour would allow a free vote on a proposal to ban hunting and would provide parliamentary time for the necessary legislation.

The Liberal Democrats say that they are opposed to hunting but that legislation is a matter of conscience for each individual MP.

And Conservative Party policy is to take no action, believing it a matter of individual choice whether to hunt or not.

In practice, of course, not all candidates toe the party line.

The only way to make sure you're not left with blood on your hands this Thursday is to quiz your particular candidate.

And vote accordingly.

If you're against hunting, vote against hunting.



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International Fund for Animal Welfare (Dept UTT), Tubwell House, New Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2QH.

*Gallup for League Against Cruel Sports, November 1991

Handwritten signature or mark.

It is the Tories' turn after all, says Ashdown

Party leaders deride Owen's latest switch

BY SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PADDY Ashdown and Neil Kinnock were united yesterday in their condemnation of David Owen's latest political conversion. Dr Owen, a former Labour cabinet minister and co-founder of the Social Democratic party, urged voters in marginal seats to vote Tory while disclosing that he would personally vote Liberal Democrat.

Paddy Ashdown said: "It is only fair to the other parties. It is the Tories' turn after all..." When questioned about talks between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, Mr Kinnock said that Mr

Ashdown's comment "on David Owen's carryings-on was probably the most brilliant of all that had been offered about somebody who switches parties. I think Paddy deserves ten out of ten."

After months of wavering, Dr Owen urged voters in 90 marginal seats, which will largely determine the outcome on Thursday, to vote Tory. He intends to vote Liberal Democrat in Bow and Poplar, a London marginal where the Liberal Democrats hope to oust the Labour candidate Mildred Gordon, who beat the Alliance into second

place in 1987 by 4,631 votes. Labour sources indicated that Dr Owen had "made approaches" through intermediaries over the years. Mr Kinnock is understood to have made clear that he was not interested in horse-trading and would be interested in an endorsement for Labour only if it came directly from Dr Owen.

Dr Owen, justifying his endorsement of Mr Major, said: "John Major is a far better prime minister than ever Neil Kinnock could be. We all change our minds from time to time, but these wholesale policy conversions make me shudder."

As a long-standing campaigner for constitutional reform, he also appealed to a minority Tory government not to shut the door on talks with the Liberal Democrats for a coalition government.

An ICM poll in the *Sunday Express* found that 7 per cent of voters, including some Liberal Democrats, would be more likely to vote Conservative after Dr Owen's endorsement. However, his remarks will not bring much joy to the two remaining Independent SDP MPs fighting to retain their seats, Rosie Barnes and John Cartwright.

It was a sign of the increasingly anxious mood within the Major camp that the party chairman Chris Patten and his advisers leapt on Dr Owen's qualified support for Mr Major, claiming that it would help significantly in the party's struggle to secure wavering voters.

As a former cabinet minister, Dr Owen is likely to be offered a seat in the Lords. Once there, he can either sit with the other left-over SDP peers or opt for the independent cross-benches, from where he can vote for whoever he wants without pressure from whips.

Leading article and letters, page 17

All three candidates claim the advantage

BY BILL FROST

DAVID Owen's ambiguous intervention yesterday had candidates for the three main parties in his old constituency all claiming the advantage.

Murdoch Macgarratt, the Liberal Democrat in Plymouth, Devonport, said callers to his campaign headquarters believed Dr Owen had nailed his colours to the party's mast. "As far as Devonport is concerned, where it's a two-horse race between us and Labour, the message they picked up was: 'vote Liberal Democrat'."

Mr Macgarratt said he might seek Dr Owen's personal support. "I think I might well ask him to come down to Devonport this week, address a Liberal Democrat meeting and give me his endorsement."

David Jamieson, the Labour candidate, was also celebrating. "Dr Owen's intervention is marvellous news for us. That man is the kiss of death for any party unlucky enough to attract his support."

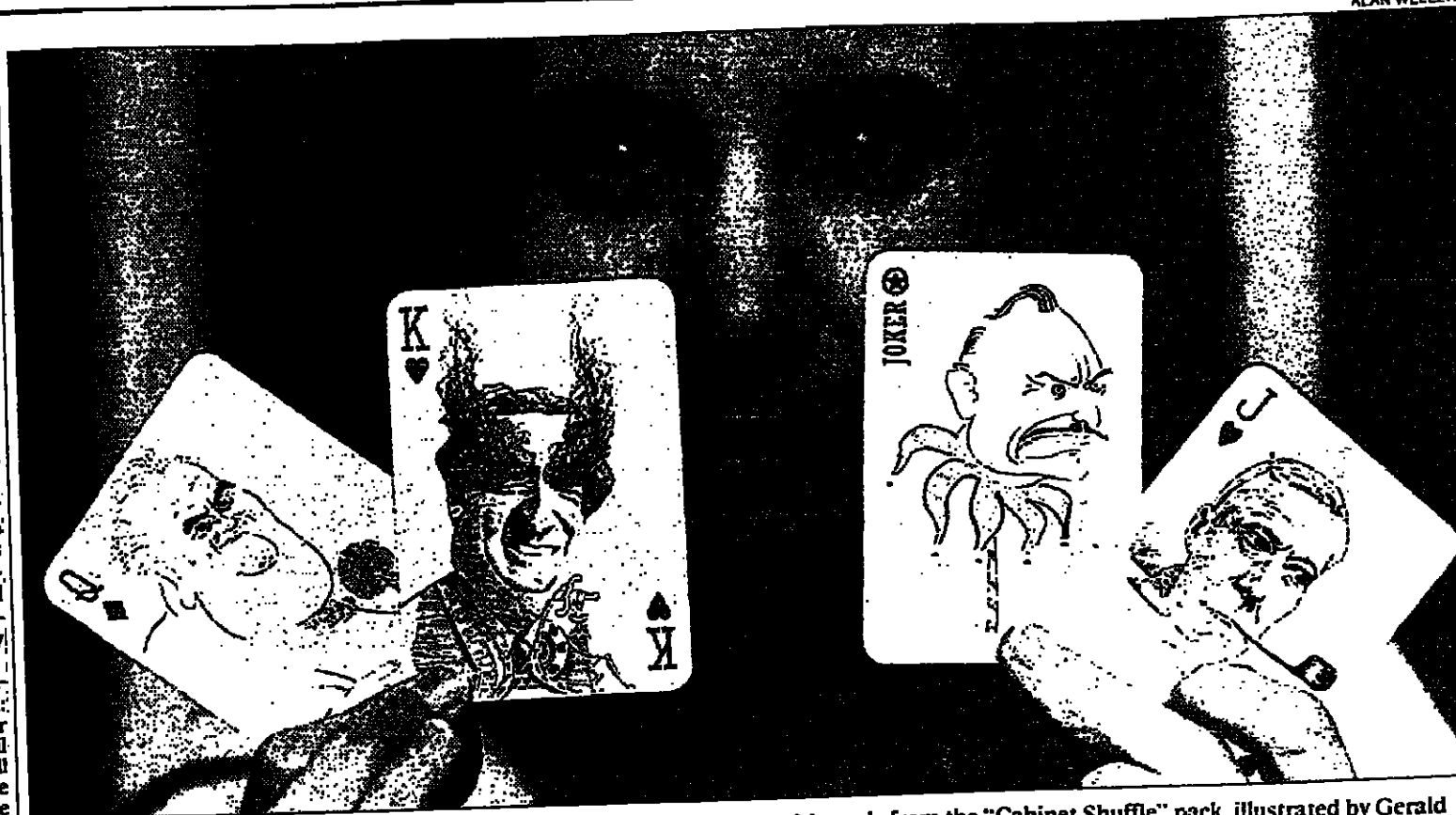
But there was jubilation in the Tory camp too. Keith Simpson, the party's candi-



Owen: likely to be offered seat in Lords

date, saw himself as the natural beneficiary of the advice offered to voters in vital marginals.

"I see this as a clear steer to them to back me on Thursday. If Labour start knocking him now, they'll only succeed in alienating those who might have supported them but still have personal affection and respect for Dr Owen."



Political deal: Jacqueline Barber, of the Victoria and Albert museum, with cards from the "Cabinet Shuffle" pack, illustrated by Gerald Scarfe, John Springs, the late Mark Boxer and Wally Fawkes in 1983. The pack is part of the museum's display of electioneering art

Ashdown wins the posture doctor's approval

Stress experts say the party leaders should slow down and straighten up, writes Victoria McKee

body language shows that in the back of his mind he's not sure he's up for the job. I'd rate him only two out of ten." It is a sad judgment against the leader of the only party which has promised to make chiropractic available on the NHS. But Dr Durnall also has doubts about the fitness of Mr Major. The prime minister expresses leanings he may not intend due to injuries from a car accident in the 1960s, which left one leg shorter than the other and causes him pain in the lower back.

Dr Durnall advises him to sit with a book under one buttock when he's not on his soapbox. "He would be an ideal candidate for chiropractic treatment," says Dr Durnall, who rates the incumbent at five out of ten on his "fitness to govern" scale because

of his slim physique. "He also leans his head too far forward which strangles his voice. That is possibly because he is naturally retiring and is trying too hard to be assertive. If you were mentally to cut off his head it would fall to the ground without touching his body."

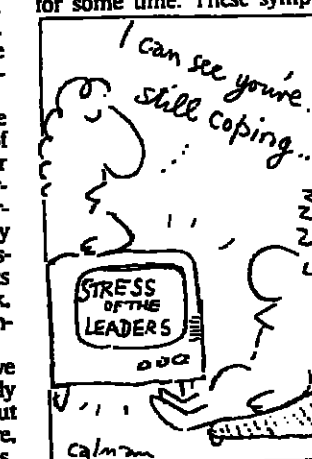
The doctor says Paddy Ashdown's "posture shows that he is a natural leader with excellent fitness and the ability to carry himself well. I'd rate him nine out of ten. But he loses a point because of the shifty way he sometimes touches his nose."

A second expert believes he has a pill for most of the ills of the present campaign. Dr Malcolm Carruthers of Harley Street, a pioneer of hormone replacement therapy for men, is already administering testosterone, by tablets or an implant in the buttock, to two MPs and three members of the House of Lords.

The reputedly aggressive male hormone would actually make MPs less aggressive but give them more positive drive, Dr Carruthers contends.

"Testosterone is a success hormone, and tests have shown that those who win have much higher levels of it than losers," he says. "Men's ability to think logically and respond to pressure without irritation should increase on testosterone."

"The symptoms of the male menopause, which I call the 'viropause', are aggression and irritability — which Neil Kinnock has shown signs of for some time. These symp-



toms may be exaggerated after a vasectomy, which Mr Kinnock has had, and it's undoubtedly tougher for someone who's been burning themselves out in Opposition without the aphrodisiac of power which causes a surge of testosterone.

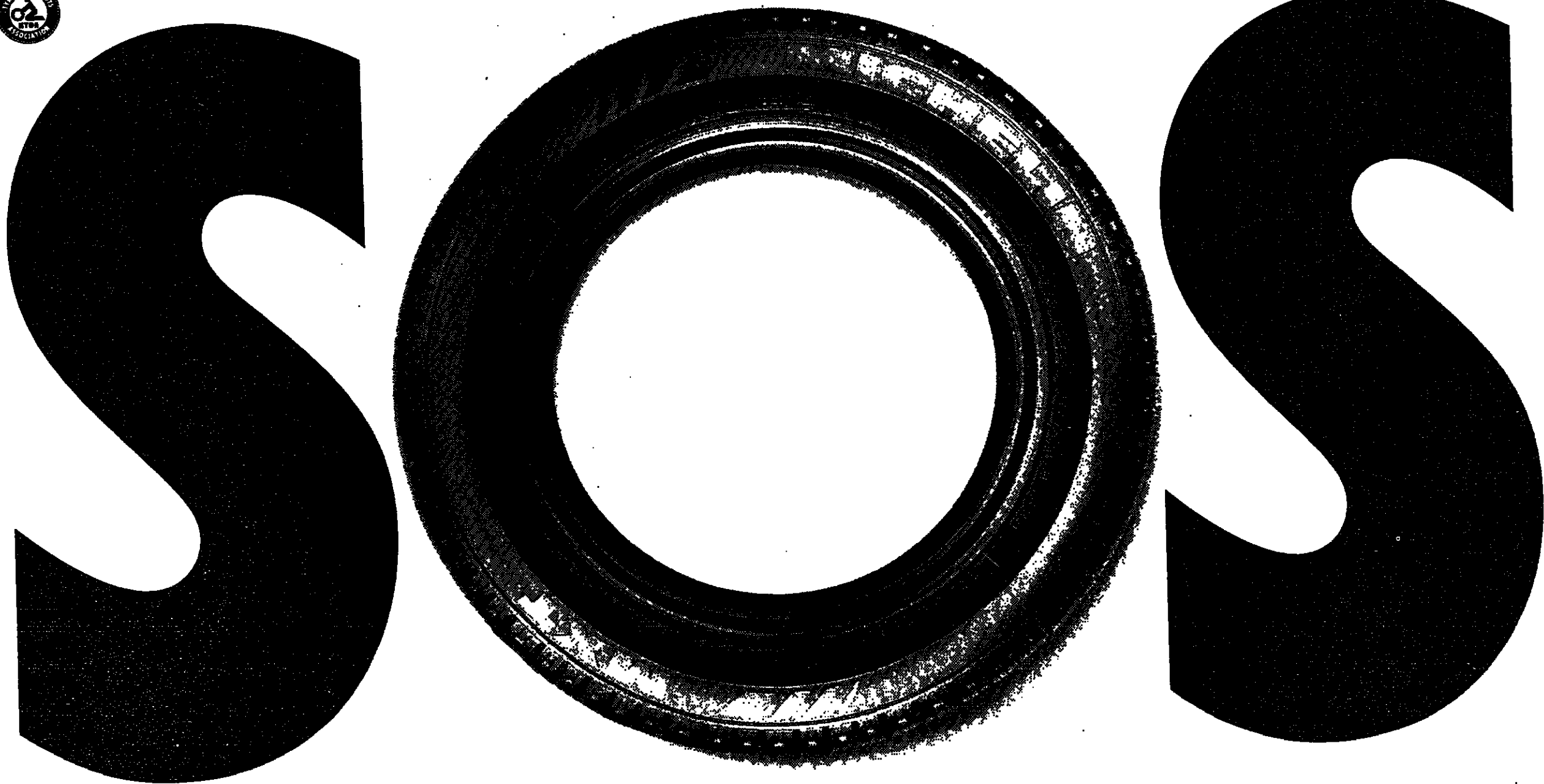
"Women MPs such as Theresa Gorman make no secret of the fact that they have been taking HRT, and I would be surprised if Margaret Thatcher didn't, so I don't think it could be regarded as unfair competition," he says.

"And while I don't think Paddy Ashdown needs it, it might make John Major a touch less 'grey'."

Professor Cary Cooper, a stress expert, says that "With PES as with PMS [pre-menstrual syndrome], small issues are blown up out of all proportion, people lose their senses of humour and every little thing becomes a problem. The whole Jennifer Bennett incident can be seen as a metaphor of the stress both parties are feeling," he says. "They are attacking each other instead of the issues."



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Constituency profiles: mixing it with the masses atop a Scots battlebus and taking a semi-detached line amid Aldershot's shoppers

The people's Pavarotti earns chorus of dissent

BY BEN MACINTYRE

"EVERY time you go away," crooned George Galloway, flanked by a vast pair of loudspeakers, "you take a piece of me with you." The Labour candidate for Glasgow, Hillhead, had found his element on an open top double-decker bus, singing along to a series of popular songs, each more politically resonant than the last.

"Enough is enough is enough," he warbled as the bus swung into the Scotstoun area of Glasgow. "That's enough of the Tories," he added by way of explanation, to a startled pair of teenagers. As a form of political discourse, karaoke might have been invented for George Galloway, since it enables him to wiggle his hips and make a lot of noise without fear of interruption. When

fingered. In Patrick, a strongly Protestant and Loyalist area, the Galloway roadshow was abruptly halted when the generator for the music system ran out of diesel. Supplies were sent for, while the fragment MP found himself engaged in an unseemly political debate with a 12-year-old girl. "You support the IRA," she said.

"No I don't," he replied. "You'll stop the Orange walks."

"You can have as many Orange walks as you like, just so long as you don't expect me to go on them."

She said: "Who do you support, anyway?"

"Patrick Thistle," he responded diplomatically. "Naa, Rangers are the best," she said.

The child disappeared, returning moments later with a handful of SNP stickers. Every time the bus tried to move off, she would dart out and attach another handful to the windows of the lower deck, and the bus would shudder to a halt.

Finally Mr Galloway lost his poise. "You do that again and you're in real trouble."

On cue, the child's father emerged from behind a chip van, shouting "Who do you think you're threatening? You can threaten me, George, but not my children."

Mr Galloway, tightening the belt on his black cashmere overcoat, appeared to be preparing to do exactly that, but the rest of the exchange was dropped out as the music system lurched back to life with Nessun Dorma, and the bus pulled away.

"I've been threatened with a stabbing in the street and I now have to have a police guard," said Mr Galloway. "On the other hand I've got the Revolutionary Communist party attacking me because I won't unequivocally support the IRA."

Mr Galloway was again lost in an imitation of Pavarotti and pondering the subject he most enjoys. "George Galloway," say what you like about him, you can't ignore him," he mused happily.

Major warns of drift, page 1
Peter Riddell, page 16
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1987 result: G Galloway (Lab) 17,958 (42.9 per cent); R H Jenkins (SDP/Lib) 14,707 (35.1); B D Cookin (C) 6,048 (14.4); W Kidd (SNP) 2,716 (6.5); A Whitehead (Grp) 423 (1.1). Lab majority 3,251 (7.8 per cent).



not singing he used the microphone to provide a running and flattering commentary on himself.

Some of the populace were doing their best to break into his musical harangue. At a corner of Byers Road, a big man erupted into a flurry of insulting gestures so violent that he tripped over his pram.

But Mr Galloway, eyes half closed and happily oblivious, had broken into a slow number about a "perfect lower". "George Galloway—the perfect lower," he said in an aside.

"Gorgeous" George's occupancy of the seat for Hillhead, which he wrested from Roy Jenkins in 1987 by 3,251 votes, has often been troubled by controversy, compounded by Mr Galloway's ability to offend enemies and allies equally. His campaign has made a virtue of this love of confrontation, using the slogan: "Straightforward, straight talking." Or, in this instance, singing.

Christopher Mason, regional councillor, requires a swing of only 3.9 per cent to retake the seat for the Liberal Democrats, but mounting support for Sandra White, the SNP candidate, appears to be splitting the vote of those not entirely seduced by Mr Galloway's charms. A recent poll suggested that the SNP had gained some 15 points on their 1987 result, pushing the Liberal Democrats into third place.

Mr Galloway's self-proclaimed position on the nationalist wing of the Labour party has taken some of the sting out of the SNP challenge. "In a situation where you have a big nationalist vote growing on the Left, I'm better placed than some others," he said.

Hillhead is among the most demographically varied of the Scottish constituencies: with the Yarrow shipyard and council estates in the west (where the Galloway bus is welcomed with raised fists), a growing business area in the east and the well-to-do middle-class housing of Kelvin-side in the north (where the bus is received with raised



Campaigning up to a point: a languid Julian Critchley has his own electioneering style; and on the whole he prefers not to mention politics

Tory faithful queue for a blessing

BY KATE MUIR

A VAST and florid gentleman with a withered blue rose in his lapel, Julian Critchley is blessing shoppers in the paper market in the town of Aldershot, Hampshire. To those trolleys containing sun-dried tomatoes and virgin olive oil, he bellows, "Oxford for the boat race", and to those with tins he says, "Good morning."

"I never talk about politics unless they do. It's much safer that way and much more congenial." This is Julian Critchley, Conservative candidate for Aldershot, engaged in an activity that comes close to canvassing. He is on crutches after a spinal operation, and says: "Central office offered me a parrot for my shoulder, but I refused since it had been Norman Tebbit's."

Were he in perfect health, it is doubtful that Mr Critchley would be an assiduous campaigner. His 17,784 majority in 1987 in a constituency once described as "safe as 250 houses" leads to a certain

slothfulness. "No MP likes elections, but all the candidates do," he says. He suspects that John Smith for Labour and Adrian Collis for the Liberal Democrats are not suffering from the same yearning for the comfort and warmth of the House of Commons. He expects his majority to shrink, perhaps even to 10,000, as the recession nibbles rather than bites Aldershot.

Although the town announces on road signs that it is "The Home of the British Army", with more than 5,000 soldiers in the area and more retired, Mr Critchley thinks that he can ride the Options for Change storm. Aldershot is not heavily affected by the defence cuts, but nearby Farnborough might see some job losses in the aircraft industry. "Not that many ordinary soldiers vote, since they are often away; so it's more wives, officers and retired colonels and majors, and their allegiances don't change on the whole."

In the Touch of Taste Café and Rainbow Grotto, where

1987 result: J M G Critchley 35,272 (69 per cent); R A Hargreaves (L/All) 17,488 (29.2); I H Pearson (Lab) 7,051 (11.8). C majority 17,784 (29.7 per cent).

Mr Critchley and his team repair after the Waitrose manager sends them packing for soliciting on the premises, they find an ex-navy man who wishes to give his opinion. "We've got to keep the U-boats down," Graham Webb, a former chief petty officer with 22 years' service, says. "There are going to be more Falklands and more Gulf wars. The bloody Arabs will get going again. There's no cutting back on it."

Mr Critchley murmured in embarrassed tones about the peace dividend, but he was not about to lose a voter. "Of course, I don't agree with their defence policy, but I wouldn't touch the other lot," Mr Webb says. "I'm not saying the Tories are right — I'm just voting for

them." Meanwhile, in the White Lion pub John Lapper, a retired major-general, adds: "From the service's point of view, the Conservatives have the right attitude, despite the redundancies. I'm talking here for the officer corps. It might be different for NCOs."

So with the army grudgingly behind it, Mr Critchley's team is confident of success. On Saturday, the team consisted of Aubrey, a boy aged nine, wearing a JM 4 PM slogan and carrying a large bag of propaganda, and a former SDP candidate, now Conservative branch chairman.

Perhaps the usual tweed-hatted minders are absent because Mr Critchley backed Michael Heseltine at the time of Margaret Thatcher's fall. A move to de-select him failed, but a Lieutenant-Commander Saxby-Solfe threatened to stand against him as an Anti-Critchley Tory. He failed to put in a nomination.

Having been an opposition movement all of his own within the Conservative par-

ty, it must be said that Mr Critchley is sanguine about a possible future in the real Opposition. "It's more fun because you don't have to be so responsible," he says. "I'm also keen on being in a government with a narrow majority, because the leadership has to start paying attention to the back benches. When they have got a majority of 100, they don't have to give a buggler."

Although Mr Critchley's recently published novel was titled *Hung Parliament*, he denies that he is a prophet. "My next effort," he says, "will be called *Floating Voter*. It takes place at the Tory party conference. Jeffrey Archer is kidnapped and five different groups claim responsibility."

He is interrupted by husbands and wives in coordinated countrywear who come across the lounge bar for benediction. For here, where voting Tory is a social rather than a political act, the touch of the Critchley hand comes as confirmation of all that is good and decent.

Devolution arguments fail to sway unconverted

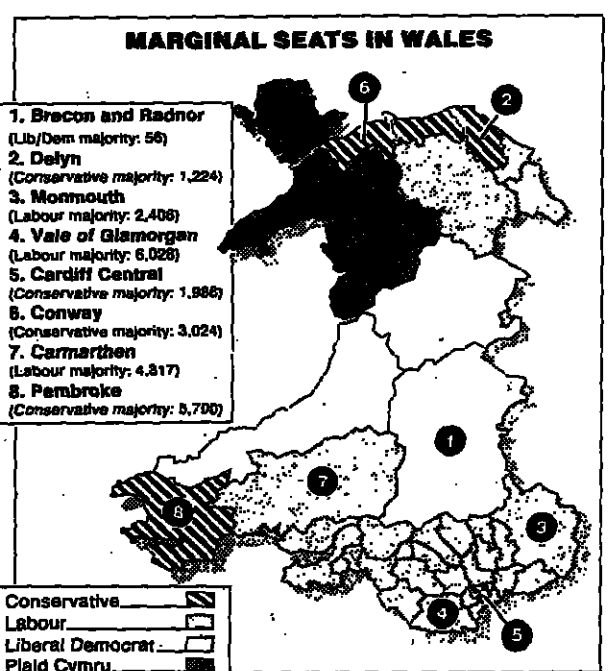
BY TIM JONES

IF ON Friday John Major and Neil Kinnock are still trying to turn a government, they can save themselves the trouble of telephoning Plaid Cymru headquarters in Cardiff. The Welsh nationalists have said they will not enter into pacts with other parties.

The three Plaid Cymru candidates likely to take their seats in the new parliament will decide each debate on its merits, although the party's radical nature should ensure that on most issues they will vote with Labour.

In spite of its best efforts, Plaid seems destined again to be confined to its mountainous northwest stronghold, where the language still lives and where salaries that could be subject to a 50p in the pound tax seem as remote as Westminster.

The old dream of an independent Wales has not diminished, although many of its candidates will do well to save their deposits rather than the nation from the *Sais* — the English. With south-east England running short of water, some poetic Plaid supporters fantasise about an independent nation that



grows rich on aqua dollars gleaned from providing water to the old enemy. But those are just dreams. More pragmatically, the Plaid leadership points to growing evidence of the desire for a form of devolved

assembly for Wales and has said it should be a revenue-raising parliament within the European Community. Dafydd Wigley, the Plaid leader, says Wales is growing tired of being treated as a colony, overseen by a "gov-

nor general" in the shape of David Hunt, the Welsh secretary, "who does not even represent a Welsh constituency."

The reality for Plaid is that its support is tied to the number of Welsh speakers. The language divides rather than unites the country. While a recent poll indicates that it can expect to increase its majority of 3,026 in Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, enticing 42 per cent of the electorate, its joint platform with the Greens in Monmouth will attract about 1 per cent.

The problem for Plaid, as for the Tories and Liberal Democrats, is that they all encounter the Labour stronghold of the South Wales valleys, where majorities of less than 20,000 are regarded as an oddity. Constituencies with Labour majorities such as the Rhondda (30,754) have been regarded by the Tories as no more than contests where potential young hopefuls can be blooded.

The argument over devolution and separatism will scarcely figure in the fight to capture the seven or eight identifiable marginal seats.

Labour has promised an assembly, within the lifetime of a parliament, that will have

democratic control over the actions of the Welsh Office. The Conservatives are firmly opposed to such a body, partly because they would be in a permanent minority.

Labour holds 26 seats in the principality, the Conservatives six and Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats three each. One of the most intriguing battles will be at Brecon and Radnor, a three-way marginal where Richard Lacey is defending a majority of only 56 for the Liberal Democrats. If Paddy Ashdown hopes to influence the next government, his party must win there.

By the same token, Huw Edwards must hold on to Monmouth for Labour if Neil Kinnock is to become prime minister. Mr Edwards captured the seat from the Tories in an acrimonious by-election in which the health service was a central issue.

To the far southwest, at Pembroke — little England beyond Wales — local issues revolving around defence-related job losses mean that Nicholas Bennet cannot be sure his 5,700 majority will be enough to save him.

In Cardiff Central, a recent poll indicates that Ian Grist,

who defends a 1,986 Tory majority, will be lucky to avoid defeat. On the North Wales coast, Sir Wyn Roberts, a Welsh Office minister, defends a 3,024 majority in Conwy, and towards Delyn, Labour will also be attacking Delyn, the most marginal Tory seat in Wales, won last time by Keith Raffan with a majority of 1,224. He has resigned his seat to become president of Spencer Communications in New York.

Given the swing to Labour, the party will probably hang on to Vale of Glamorgan, which it gained in a 1989 by-election by 6,028 votes.

Because of local issues, Plaid could turn Carmarthen, held for Labour with a majority of 4,317, into a close fight, though it will probably be retained by Alan Williams, the defending candidate.

Heritage plea wins backing of Gould

Bryan Gould, Labour environment spokesman, is backing a group of conservationists campaigning to save Heveningham Hall, the Georgian mansion in Suffolk whose future is in doubt.

Mr Gould has written to local activists pledging his commitment to securing the future of the house and maintaining public access. He joins Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, and Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, in cross-party support for the mansion, now in the hands of receivers and due to go on the market later this year.

Ian Richardson, organiser of the Heveningham action group, said that the move followed all-party support in the Lords, and showed that after the election the house would be top of the heritage agenda for any government.

The action group wants the house placed in National Trust ownership after its troubled period in foreign hands.

Police defuse poster dispute

A dispute between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats over the disappearance of election posters at Cheltenham has been defused after a police caution for four youths for removing some of the posters. Police said that the youths were not "connected with, members of, or affiliated to, any political party."

No easing-up

Nicholas Winterton, defending a big Tory majority of 19,092 in Macclesfield, says he has been the victim of a dirty tricks campaign in the constituency that led to a local newspaper publishing a report that he felt so sure of victory that he was taking a break in the last days of the campaign. The newspaper issued a press release retracting the report and apologising to Mr Winterton.

Aid pledge

A new department of international development would be headed by a cabinet minister if Labour is elected. Ann Clwyd, the party's overseas aid spokesman, said yesterday. She was helping to launch a policy document on aid, and said that at the present rate of growth, it would take the government 95 years to reach the target of aid of 0.7 per cent of gross national product set for Britain by the UN.

Majors' say

A survey of John Majors shows that only one in five of the prime minister's name-sakes will vote for his party on Thursday. Half of those canvassed by the National News Agency said that they were led up with his policies, preferring Labour. Only 6 per cent support the Liberal Democrats, and 25 per cent say that they have yet to decide how to vote. The John Majors campaign for Major for being boring. Fifty John and J Majors were questioned.

Odds for tie

Heavy betting on a hung parliament, including one £5,000 wager, has led the bookmaker William Hill to cut the odds from 4-5 to 4-6. The odds for two elections this year have come down to 2-1 from 5-2. Hill makes Labour 4-11 favourite to emerge as the biggest single party, with the Conservatives at 15-8, and Lib Dems at 200-1.

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AIR CALL

Nationalists dismiss polls showing drop in support

BY KERRY GILL

THE Scottish National party sought to put a brave face on two opinion polls published yesterday, both showing a four-point fall in support. The polls, by Mori and Market Research Scotland, put the nationalists on 23 per cent and 27 per cent respectively.

It was a disappointment to the SNP, indicating that another poll by Market Research Scotland, which put the party on 31 per cent at the end of last week, was a false dawn. The Mori figure is the lowest for the nationalists this year. Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, said that

the two polls, Mori for *The Sunday Times* in Scotland, and the other for *Scotland on Sunday*, underestimated SNP support.

He and his party activists have said for some time that their soundings showed the SNP in a healthier position, in the low thirties. "These polls do not reflect the reality of what is happening on the ground as is obvious to anyone who has spent the past three weeks campaigning," Mr Salmond said.

The election in Scotland was still a two-horse race between the SNP and Labour, with the nationalists gaining ground. "That has been shown in a series of local constitu-

ency polls putting the SNP ahead in seats from Galloway to the Western Isles," he said.

Labour's gains, a five-point leap to 43 per cent compared with a Market Research Scotland poll at the end of last month, have come mainly at the expense of the SNP and the Conservatives. The Tories went down three points to 18 per cent and the Liberal Democrats up a point to 11 per cent, according to Market Research Scotland. Mori showed Labour up two points to 44 per cent, the Tories up one to 21 per cent and the Liberal Democrats rising two points to 12 per cent.

The constitutional issue remains

at the forefront of all the parties' campaigns. Yet, three days away from the election, no single option has a majority of support. According to Market Research Scotland, those favouring independence number 34 per cent, 40 per cent are backing devolution and 20 per cent want the present system retained. Mori's poll suggests that as many as 42 per cent believe that devolution would be likely to lead to independence within ten years. It also shows that support for the current system has risen three points, to 23 per cent.

Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary and former Scottish secre-

tary, said Scotland needed a Labour government as much as Sicily needed the Mafia. Speaking in Ayr, a Conservative seat in danger of falling to Labour, Mr Rifkind, who has proved the most effective Tory campaigner in Scotland, emphasised the economic benefits the Tories had brought, particularly low unemployment when compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.

"A Labour government would extort taxes from the people, impose a stifling bureaucracy on personal initiative and suffocate the free enterprise spirit which is giving Scotland unprecedented prosperity," he said.

Washington wakes up to the prospect of a Britain governed by Labour



Bush: respect for John Major "knows no bounds"

Suddenly the general election has caught Washington's attention. It has abruptly registered after 12 years of working with ideological soulmates in Downing Street, the administration could within days be dealing with a Labour government. It is a prospect causing intense interest and some apprehension.

Government departments are hurrying to ascertain Labour's positions on a range of issues. Having taken Britain's support for granted during crises such as the bombing of Libya, the Panama invasion and Operation Desert Storm, officials are seeking reassurance that Labour would

After 12 years of working with the Tories, America is preparing for a possible change at Westminster, Martin Fletcher writes

continue the Tories' tough line against, for example, Libyan terrorism, Iraqi recalcitrance or "fortress Europe" protectionism. A broader concern as President Bush faces re-election in November is that political trends in Britain tend to foreshadow those in America. As Britain swings to the right or left, so generally does America. A specific question is whether Labour would replace Sir Robin Renwick, Britain's en-

ergetic ambassador, with a political appointment. Labour has ditched the nuclear unilateralism to which the Reagan administration objected so strongly in 1987 and embraced both Nato and Europe. "Kinnock's current programme doesn't present a whole lot of difficulties with our bilateral relationship," one administration official said. "The great unknown is will there be a community of

instincts? Will Kinnock immediately come to the same conclusions as this administration? ... There is a lot of appreciation of how valuable working with the UK has been and we very much hope that whatever the outcome that relationship will continue."

Another source said that inevitably there would be a loss of intimacy. "These guys have got used to picking up the phone and talking to people they know and like and trust." They had been able to count on British support absolutely, but now there would be "a whole new bunch of people and they will have to think twice — will the Brits be with us?" On

his last trip to America, in July 1990, Neil Kinnock laid the ghost of his disastrous White House encounter of 1987 and impressed senior officials as reasonable, well briefed and accommodating, if a little verbose.

He naturally still generates more enthusiasm on Democrat-controlled Capitol Hill than in the Republican White House, while Gerald Kaufman, the putative foreign secretary, remains almost completely unknown quantity. He is said to have abandoned plans to visit Washington because he could not see James Baker, Secretary of State. The

State Department is also studying the ramifications of another Tory win. Officials realise that John Major would for the first time have his own mandate and could "shed all remaining Thatcherisms". They are also aware that a very slim Tory majority could limit his room for manoeuvre on contentious issues of interest to America.

Mr Bush none the less made his views abundantly clear on the day the election was announced. He did not want to interfere in British politics, he said, but Mr Major was a "superb leader" and his respect for the prime minister "knows no bounds".

Last broadcasts hold key

Late deciders offer the Tories little comfort

By IVOR CREWE

WITH the weekend's poll of polls putting Labour 2.5 points ahead, the Conservatives need a swing of at least 3 per cent to retain their overall majority. They are pinning their hopes of a late spurt on the apparently large number of remaining "don't knows". They may be right to believe that the "undecideds" are more numerous than usual: the Mori/Sunday Times panel survey has consistently found a larger proportion of undecideds and waverers than at the equivalent stages of the 1983 and 1987 campaigns. But yesterday's headlines suggesting that as many as one in four (the NOP/Mail on Sunday) or even one in three (the Harris/Observer poll) remain "don't knows" are almost certainly wide of the mark. Closer inspection of the NOP poll shows that, among the 24 per cent who have not "definitely decided", only 5 per cent said there was a "good chance of changing". According to past BBC/Gallup election-day surveys, the proportion making up their mind only in the last

few days of the campaign has varied between 5 per cent (1987) and 12 per cent (1979). This time the figure will probably be at the higher end of the range. Even so, the Tories would need to take almost all of the late deciders to keep their majority. If 10 per cent have still to decide, they would need to split something like Tory 70, Labour 10, Lib Dem 20.

Present evidence of the Conservatives' capacity to attract the don't knows is discouraging. The two panel surveys of this campaign — Mori's for *The Sunday Times* and NOP's for *The Independent on Sunday* — both show that voters who began the campaign as don't knows have split 4-3 in favour of Labour over the Conservatives, with between a fifth and a quarter opting for the Liberal Democrats.

The NOP panel found that among the waverers there were twice as many potential Tory defectors as recruits. The Tories will need a radical change of campaign tactics to reverse that ratio.

Nor are past elections encouraging. Surprise late swings are not unknown, as the unexpected victories for the Conservatives in 1979 and for Labour in February 1974 remind us. But in both cases the swing was to the Opposition when the outgoing government was defending a difficult record. On past form, any last-minute lurch by the voters is more likely to help Labour than the Tories.

It is even more likely to help the Liberal Democrats. In the past three elections late deciders have been roughly twice as likely as the rest of the electorate to vote for the centre — about half voted for the Alliance in 1983 and 1987.

The motives are partly tactical, partly protest: many late deciders are equally indifferent to or indignant with the two main parties and see the centre as a halfway house. Whatever the reason, the centre vote has risen by two to three points in the final week of the past three elections. According to the BBC/Gallup surveys, what had by far the most influence on the late deciders were the parties' final election broadcasts. John Major's will need to be of Churchillian dimensions to turn the election round.

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Sinn Fein support still sliding

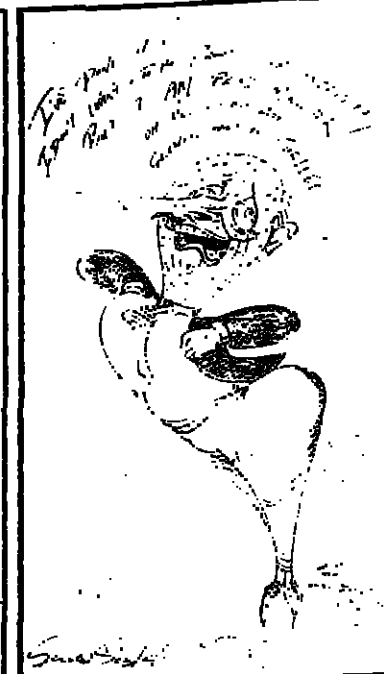
By EDWARD GORMAN
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE first opinion poll conducted in Northern Ireland this year shows significant support emerging for the newly organised Conservative party. A rating of 9 per cent makes it the fourth largest political force in the province. The survey by Mori, carried out for *The Sunday Times* last week, also found overwhelming support among Protestant and Unionist voters for a deal with a minority Conservative government in a hung parliament. It shows too, that there is a real possibility that Gerry Adams the Sinn Fein president, may lose his seat in West Belfast to the moderate SDLP, which is benefiting from a 3 per cent swing in the Belfast area.

The Conservatives share of the vote places it two points ahead of Sinn Fein (7 per cent) and just behind the Alliance (10 per cent), both of which trail the two Unionist parties (UUP 32 per cent, DUP 15 per cent) and the SDLP (20 per cent). Although it does not look as though the Tories will return an MP — their best chance is in the North Down constituency where the sitting MP is Jim Kilfedder — they look set to make an important impact in their first general election since organising in Northern Ireland two years ago.

The 7 per cent rating for Sinn Fein, if reflected on Thursday, will be another serious setback. The party has declined steadily since the 1983 election, when it scored 13.4 per cent; in 1987 its vote fell to 11.4 per cent. Another fall will further undercut its already limited support and must reflect the success of the government-led marginalisation of the party while it continues its support for IRA violence.

How weekend cartoonists see prospects for a hung poll



Cartoonists' eye view: Cummings in the *Sunday Express* yesterday (left), Rushton in *The Sunday Telegraph* and Scarfe in *The Sunday Times* offer their comments

Political fixers gear up for a hung House

Robin Oakley considers the options for the party leaders if Thursday's general election fails to give a decisive majority to Labour or the Tories

OF THE 47 main opinion polls conducted since the general election was called, only six have indicated a clear majority for one party or another. Britain appears to be heading for a hung parliament, and that will mean a situation we have experienced rarely in Britain and not at all since 1974.

What happened last time?

In the February 1974 general election, Harold Wilson's Labour party won 301 seats to the 297 of Edward Heath's Conservatives. It was not clear until the last Scottish results came in on Saturday that Labour had not won an overall majority. On the ground that the Tories had 38.2 per cent of the vote to Labour's 37.2, Mr Heath stayed on in Downing Street until the Monday after the election trying to do a deal with Jeremy Thorpe, the Liberal leader, whom he offered one cabinet place and a Speaker's conference on electoral reform.

Mr Thorpe was tempted, but it became clear that his party had no wish to prop up a defeated Tory government and his 14 MPs voted against the idea. Mr Heath resigned and Mr Wilson, as leader of the next largest party, was invited by the Queen to form a minority government. He was able to govern until October because the Conservatives were in no hurry for an election.

How long will it take to decide who governs?

Parliament is to meet again on April 27 for election of a new Speaker and any deal will need to be concluded before then. The Queen's speech in the new parliament, for which the leader of any minority party will need to be sure that he has support, is due on May 6.

Can John Major stay on as prime minister if the Tories lose their majority?

If, as the polls indicate, Mr Major loses his overall majority, he will have three options, depending on the arithmetic. He could seek to continue in

office as leader of a minority government, putting together packages of support from minority parties for individual measures. He could seek an informal pact, as Labour had with the Liberals for part of the 1974-9 Parliament, giving a minority party the right to be consulted in advance on policy decisions but without their enjoying ministerial posts. Or he could establish a formal coalition, taking MPs of another party or parties into his government.

Mr Major has said he will do no deals and has emphatically rejected PR, the price of any deal with Paddy Ashdown and the Liberal Democrats. But the Ulster Unionists, Tory allies in the past, have indicated that they might offer support to a minority Tory administration.

What would happen if Labour was the biggest party?

If Labour was the largest single party, Neil Kinnock would be invited by the Queen to seek to form a government as soon as Mr Major resigned. He too has denied that he would contemplate a deal, saying that he has not even struck the opening chords, let alone made overtures to the Liberal Democrats. But he has edged noticeably closer to them during the campaign, inviting participation by other parties in the Plant committee investigation of electoral systems and hinting at the introduction of PR for the European parliament. Labour's already announced programme for the first session of parliament includes two items designed to have maximum appeal to Liberal Democrat MPs: a Scottish parliament and a freedom of information Act. Labour strategists believe that Mr Ashdown would have

trouble with his own party if he refused to co-operate with such a programme because it did not include PR for Westminster elections. Labour's hope is that it could survive for long enough as a minority government for Mr Kinnock and his team to gain added authority from his period in Downing Street. He would be granted a dissolution by the Queen when he sought it, and would then hope to appeal to the country for a working majority.

How soon will we get another election?

Harold Wilson's minority Labour government lasted only from February to October in 1974. Any government coming in this month would hope to avoid an October election, partly because Britain will hold the presidency of the European Community from July 1 to December 31 and partly because the uncertainty caused by a hung parliament would upset the markets and in all probability delay the long-awaited economic recovery. No minority government would really want to face the electors if it

could avoid doing so until some signs of that recovery were evident.

Where do the Liberal Democrats come in?

As mentioned above, the Liberal Democrats are insisting on commitment to PR at Westminster and devolution for Scotland and Wales, two conditions that would make it impossible for Mr Major to deal with them: he has been emphatic in ruling out both. But Mr Ashdown has also said he disagrees with Labour on every point of economic policy and that his party would vote down a Labour finance bill implementing the tax package outlined in John Smith's shadow budget.

He wants a coalition for a full parliamentary term, to give his party experience in government, and will not settle for another Lib-Lab pact. But Labour believes that Scottish Liberal Democrats in particular would press their leader for a deal on easier terms, to obtain the Scottish parliament that Labour has promised.

What about the Unionists?

The two groups of Ulster Unionists, the UUP led by James Molyneux and the DUP led by the Rev Ian Paisley, are expected to number 14. They will work together in a hung parliament and want a tacit understanding rather than a formal coalition

with a minority government. Ministers have made efforts to improve relations with Ulster Unionists of late and would be likely to make concessions such as instituting a select committee on Northern Ireland and changing the system of Northern Ireland legislation in return for voting support. But they would not be willing to abandon the Anglo-Irish agreement.

An Ulster Unionist deal with Labour is less likely. There is suspicion of Labour's ultimate aims for Irish unification and polls show that the Tories would have much stronger support than Labour if mainland parties only stood in Ulster. Labour could also lose the support of the three Social Democratic and Labour party MPs if they were too accommodating to the Ulster Unionists. But the Ulster Unionists did deal with James Callaghan's minority government and won an extra five seats for the province. The problem for any party in relying on the support of Northern Ireland MPs is in ensuring that they turn up at Westminster to vote.

Is there anything in it for the nationalists?

John Major's strong resistance to any kind of Scottish devolution makes a deal between Tories and nationalists virtually impossible. But it would not be easy for Labour, which had 50 seats in Scotland in 1987, and the Scottish nationalists to do any deal. Although there are points of contact on economic and social policy, they have little incentive to help each other. But increased powers for Labour's proposed Scottish assembly might buy some co-operation. Plaid Cymru is keeping its options open. Again, a deal with the Conservatives is unlikely because of the party's opposition to devolution. But the Welsh nationalists resent the fact that Labour is unwilling to offer a Welsh senedd the same powers as a Scottish parliament.

Major's warning, page 1



Memories of a previous hung Parliament: Jeremy Thorpe (left) with Harold Wilson

MEDIAWATCH by Brian MacArthur

Late move to Labour fails to halt a loyal tide

NEIL Kinnock won two new supporters in Fleet Street yesterday as the nine main Sunday papers made their vote. A majority endorsed the Tories, with five voting Tory against the four which opted for Labour. If Fleet Street had its way, there would be no hung parliament. Judged by sales, the Sunday papers delivered a majority for John Major over Neil Kinnock of ten million to 5.8 million.

That, however, assumes that readers vote as their papers tell them, which is only partly true. The *News of the World* enthusiastically backed John Major — but 47 per cent of its readers plan to vote Labour, according to Mori, against 33 per cent who will vote Tory, which suggests that they are more interested in sex and sin than politics. (Among *Sun* readers, for the record, the split is 41 per cent Tory to 40 per cent Labour).

The two new anti-Tory Fleet Street votes, on the other hand, were from papers whose readers mostly share their views. One was the *Observer*, so tortured by the choice in 1987 that it appeared to want a coalition of all three parties, which jumped off the fence and plumped for Labour. So will most of its readers, according to Mori: 48 per cent intend to vote Labour and 28 per cent Liberal Democrat.

An endorsement was more difficult for *The Independent on Sunday*. At the last election, *The Independent* upheld its independence by refusing to endorse any party. As a variant on that policy, it intends this week to make the positive case for each party, ending with the Liberal Democrats. Yesterday, however, Ian Jack, executive editor of *The Ios*, explained in a signed leading article why he could

not vote Tory. Margaret Thatcher's regime had grown corrupt and arrogant and made too many mistakes, he said. "Today we suffer the results, ungraced by a word of regret or apology." Given its readers' voting intentions, that decision, too, was not surprising: 35 per cent will vote Labour and 33 per cent Liberal Democrat. It did, however, dent that reputation for political independence should now read: It was. Are you?

The main scoop yesterday was the declaration by David Owen in *The Mail on Sunday* that voters in marginal seats should help to keep Mr Major as prime minister. Its timing was agreed before the election started between Dr Owen and Stewart Steven, the editor, for maximum impact. That mutual pact certainly succeeded. *The Mail on Sunday's* main

rival, the *Sunday Express*, also led on the story, albeit without acknowledging its provenance, and it was reported in four other papers — though in none of the three Labour papers.

Yet as the nation awaits the verdict of Fleet Street before deciding how to vote — and only if you believe that you can really write convincing leading articles — the question arises whether what the papers say really matters. An unusually frank admission was made by Mr Jack, who pointed out that for all their Olympian thunder leading articles are written by men and women with mortgages and children and trains to catch just like you and me. Quite a few still have chauffeurs, however.

Only four papers have still to declare their position — the *Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* and *Today*.

Cook sets health target

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR will act in its first month to support a European Community ban on tobacco advertising and establish a special cabinet committee on health promotion, Robin Cook, the shadow health secretary, pledged yesterday.

The party started the campaign final week by returning to its strongest single issue and effectively relaunched its health manifesto by setting out its "checklist" for its first four months in office. In the first month it would halt work on hospital opt-outs and set a timetable for integrating the first wave into community health authorities.

Mr Cook accused the government of having killed a white paper on health promotion because of campaign support from Imperial Tobacco, and said Labour had

learned that Imperial Tobacco had given 2,000 advertising sites to the Conservatives. "There is no longer any mystery as to why the Cabinet committee chaired by Chris Patten killed off a White Paper on health promotion which has broad public support. He sold the White Paper for a list of poster sites."

Mr Patten later accused Mr Cook of a "straightforward fabrication". He denied he had been chairman of any cabinet committee dealing with health, health promotion or the health White Paper. "The scandal about party political advertising is that the trade unions are queuing up to spend money on behalf of the Labour party in return for favours, if heaven forbid, Labour were ever to form a government."

Mr. Major says he's lowered taxes. The taxman says he's put them up. The taxman isn't standing for re-election.

Mr. Major would have you believe that his is the government of lower taxes.

But the government's own figures show that the total amount of tax taken has risen from 34.75% of GDP in 1978/9 to 36.75% in 1991/2.

Of course income tax has been cut. But the government have taken back even more by increasing VAT and other taxes and introducing the poll tax.

The Inland Revenue Staff Federation believe this is an unfair way to tax.

VAT and flat rate poll tax cost the same to everyone, no matter what they earn.

Income tax, on the other hand, is paid by those who can afford to pay.

We're sorry to have to put you right, Mr. Major. But it's our job to spot a tax dodge.

INLAND REVENUE STAFF FEDERATION

Clash over trial evidence breaks up Mandela marriage



Problems ahead: Mr and Mrs Mandela seen in public together after his release from prison

COLLAPSE of the 36-year marriage of Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie — for 27 of which the African National Congress leader was in prison — was reported at the weekend but it had been expected for some time.

Since her trial last year when she was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for kidnapping and assault relating to the death of Stompie Mokhele, a teenage activist, the couple have been pursuing virtually separate lives and have seldom been seen in public together. But it is unlikely that Mr Mandela, aged 72, will divorce his wife, who is nearly 20 years younger. They will separate legally, with Mrs Mandela staying in the lavish house she built in Soweto, near Johannesburg.

Winnie Mandela's alleged involvement with violence and an ultimatum from her husband to stay out of politics led to their split-up, Ray Kennedy writes

ous disappearance last week of Mrs Xoliswa Felati, aged 38, one of Mrs Mandela's three co-defendants, who was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for assault and kidnapping. Like Mrs Mandela, she is on bail pending an appeal against conviction and sentence due on April 30. But it is claimed there was a furious quarrel between the two women last weekend, when Mrs Felati threatened to say that she had lied during the trial to protect Mrs Mandela.

Mrs Felati was working at a Methodist Church sanctuary in Soweto from which 14-year-old Stompie Mokhele was abducted by Mrs Mandela's notorious team of bodyguards, the Mandela United Football Club, four years ago. He was taken with three other youths to Mrs Mandela's Soweto home and his battered body was found later in a ditch. Jerry Richardson, the club's so-called coach, was subsequently sentenced to death for murder and is being held with other condemned prisoners in Pretoria central prison.

to leave her backyard room. "She was drunk and in a foul mood and waving a Makarov pistol," Mrs Felati is reported as saying. "She came at me like a mad woman. She was screaming at me that I was going to prison."

Mr Mandela is said to have intervened, but the next day Mrs Felati telephoned a newspaper and said she was "not feeling safe". When reporters arrived neighbours told them she had left in a car accompanied by several men. ANC officials have refused to comment on the reported breakdown of the marriage. Mrs Mandela's high-profile political conduct has frequently embarrassed her husband even before he was freed from prison, as well as the ANC hierarchy.

about its thuggish activities, which led eventually to the kidnapping and assault trial, began to surface. Mr Mandela attended court on most days during her three-month trial last year, but it was noticeable that she spent most time during recesses with her own associates rather than with her husband.

Now, it is reported, after a "showdown" with his wife, he has demanded that she should withdraw from politics, something which the charismatic Mrs Mandela will clearly find extremely difficult to do.

The radical Pan Africanist Congress, which until now has refused to take part in constitutional negotiations, is to hold talks with the South African government in Nigeria this week, according to Clarence Makwetu, the PAC president. He did not rule out

the possibility of the PAC taking part in Cudesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa), depending on the outcome of the talks.

The meeting will be held under the chairmanship of President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, in Abuja. The South African delegation will be led by R.F. "Pik" Botha, the foreign minister. According to Nigerian radio, President de Klerk will visit the country late this week for talks with President Babangida.

Continuing black-on-black violence in South Africa has claimed 36 more lives since Friday and a right-wing extremist group, the "Wit Wolves" (White Wolves), has claimed responsibility for a bomb blast at a trade show in Johannesburg which injured nine others.

Gloom descends on Washington

White House morale hits its lowest point

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

MARLIN Fitzwater, President Bush's veteran press secretary, came close to resigning last week out of frustration at the endless disarray in the White House in this election year.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, dozens of incumbent congressmen really are leaving, fed up with an institution afflicted by legislative paralysis and viewed with unprecedented contempt by the public. With many other congressmen doomed by the House banking scandal, there are already predictions of a higher turnover in the House this November than 1948's record 118.

In short, a profound malaise has enveloped Washington. The nation is sick of its political establishment. Voters are either giving up on the electoral process, or turning

in huge numbers to insurgent "outsiders" like Jerry Brown, Patrick Buchanan and — though he has yet to declare — the Texas billionaire Ross Perot. If Mr Bush, now below 40 per cent in the polls, does win re-election, it will be largely by default.

The *Washington Post* reported at the weekend that Mr Fitzwater left a recent White House planning meeting in disgust, complaining that he had "just about had enough". He abruptly left for a holiday in Bermuda.

Mr Fitzwater issued a somewhat equivocal rebuttal of the story, but few questioned its gist. Officials spoke of "functional gridlock" at the White House, of "operational constipation" and "an unbelievable inability to execute". One said Mr Fitzwater, who has to explain White House

policy to the country, had vociferously complained at the meeting of "endless meetings, endless planning, re-planning and revisiting and that nothing ever gets done".

Samuel Skinner, the president's new Chief of Staff, was the butt of much of the criticism. He is said to have created a bureaucracy top-heavy with inexperienced officials incapable of following through on their decisions. The result has been that Mr Bush, who is reportedly "miserable", has spent the year jumping from theme to theme, strategy to strategy, and has received the worst press of his presidency. The Centre for Media and Public Affairs calculated that 76 per cent of his coverage since January 1 has been negative.

The latest strategy of a president, who has spent quarter of a century in Washington, is to cast himself as the scourge of the political status quo by bashing the Democrat-controlled congress, the one target weaker than himself.

Following the House post office and banking scandals, which crystallised the public perception of Congress as corrupt, self-serving and out of touch, one poll last week showed the institution now had a derisive 17 per cent approval rating. Veteran members say morale has never been so low. Three times in the last two weeks the Democratic leadership has been unable to muster majorities for controversial legislation.

Already about 50 congressmen and six senators have announced that for various reasons they will not seek re-election in November, some lacing their announcements with bitter words. Warren Rudman, New Hampshire's highly respected senator, declared himself "terribly frustrated" because he could accomplish nothing. Senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota is leaving after one term because the budget deficit, which he had pledged to reduce, was instead "completely out of control".

So strong is America's present hostility to incumbents that the Republicans harbour outside hopes of winning majorities in the Senate for the first time since 1980 and the House for the first time since 1954. They are deliberately inflaming the public's anger.

The Democrats' House majority of 102 will almost certainly be reduced. The Democrats outnumber Republicans 57-43 in the Senate, but have significantly more senators facing difficult contests this autumn.

As Gaddafi grows more bellicose, Arab leaders are trying to contain Muslim anger, Christopher Walker writes from Cairo

ARAB foreign ministers are to meet in emergency session in Cairo tomorrow in a last-ditch attempt to devise a face-saving formula to avert the imposition of United Nations sanctions against Libya from April 15. The ministers from the seven-nation committee set up by the Arab League in an effort to resolve the impasse have been snubbed by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi who withdrew an offer to hand over the two Lockerbie suspects to them.

Since then, his attitude has grown more bellicose and uncompromising. The Cairo initiative takes place amid growing anxiety in the Arab world about the possible destabilising effects against countries with moderate Islamic regimes like Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco which have hinted that they will implement the UN sanctions.

The league negotiations will be matched by a visit to Tripoli later this week by Vladimir Petrovsky, the UN undersecretary-general. The diplomatic action has taken on new urgency because of Libya's determination to transform the worsening situation into a struggle between Muslims and Christians, a tactic tried by President Saddam Hussein of Iraq during the Gulf war.

Despite blood-curdling rhetoric, the Libyan leader has made clear that the two suspects, both intelligence agents, are free to surrender to either the Arab League or the UN. Variations on this idea will prove the main substance of this week's diplomatic manoeuvring.

"If the United States and Britain give Gaddafi guarantees that he personally is not the 'big fish' in the Lockerbie affair, then there is a slight hope of a breakthrough by finding a formula to hand the suspects to the Arab League," an Arab diplomat in Tripoli said.

In a fiery speech on Saturday, Colonel Gaddafi defiantly dismissed the threatened sanctions and urged Muslims to "sharpen their swords" to resist a new crusade against Islam from the Christian West. "Muslims all over the world, the battle being waged by modern Western crusading forces, having ended against communism, is now being directed against Islam," he told 3,000 Libyans in the capital's main square.

As people shouted *Allahu Akbar* (God is Great), the white-robed leader told them: "We, too, have to beat the drums and close ranks and sharpen our swords and get

Arabs seek a way out for Libya



Prayer leader: Colonel Gaddafi appearing at dawn prayers in Tripoli to mark the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, before making a fiery weekend speech

ready for the confrontation." By playing the Islamic card, Colonel Gaddafi has increased pressure for protests against sanctions to spread to other Arab nations.

Invoking cries of *jihad* (holy war), the Libyan leader told the dawn gathering marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan: "If they try them (the suspects) at the Arab League or in an Arab or friendly country, that would be fine. But they want them tried in a Christian country."

If this is an excuse to occupy Libya, we will resort to arms and automatic guns and barricades. There will be guns and trenches, a line of fire between us and them."

The Libyan leader, worried that any trial could expose the involvement of his secret service in the Lockerbie attack, declared: "Resolution 748 is baseless and thus it is rejected. Libya has not threatened world peace and committed no aggression against other countries. The resolution

based on chapter seven of the UN charter cannot be implemented and is null."

The similarity between the Lockerbie impasse and the Gulf war has been noted by many commentators. *Al-Ahram*, the Cairo daily, denounced Libya's threat to damage Western economic interests and to stop Westerners from leaving as "a gross miscalculation and failure to understand the new world — they are the same mad acts committed by Saddam".

Cautious Cuomo hedges his bets

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

BILL Clinton made his statutory court call on Governor Mario Cuomo of New York at the weekend. He received, in advance of tomorrow's critical primary, the nearest thing to an endorsement he could have hoped for from the man he recently called a "mean son of a bitch who acted like a Mafia boss".

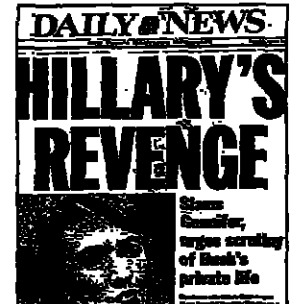
Mr Clinton would make a "superb president", said Mr Cuomo, who has a long history of ideological and personal conflict with Mr Clinton. It was almost as an afterthought that he added that he would also support Jerry Brown, Mr Clinton's Democratic opponent, were he to win the party's nomination.

Mr Clinton had disparaged Mr Cuomo in recorded telephone conversations with Gennifer Flowers, his alleged lover, which Ms Flowers released in January. This time, for public consumption, Mr Clinton called Mr Cuomo "one of the most brilliant and insightful political leaders this country has produced in my lifetime." You had to be a little mean just to survive in New York, added the man who has endured a two-week bashing by the media.

The Clinton camp were delighted by the visit to Albany, the state capital, and received official endorsement of *The New York Times*. Some of the allegations levelled against him had been unfair and exaggerated, said the newspaper, which had itself devoted considerable resources to investigating Mr Clinton's past. Those allegations obscured "a record of accomplishment that gives credibility to the cogent programme he proposes".

Mr Brown meanwhile called Mr Clinton the "prince of sleaze" and "puppet" and "frontman" for the political establishment he pretended to oppose.

Mr Clinton is believed to have a slight edge in New York. Failure to win would leave him looking terribly weak and give rise to a welter of speculation about new entrants, a brokered convention or the return of Paul Tsongas. The former Massachusetts senator remains on the New York ballot despite his withdrawal from the race last month.



How city saw Hillary Clinton's remarks

Clintons blow the gaffe

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

JUST when Bill Clinton, the governor of Arkansas, spotted the light at the end of New York's political tunnel of darkness in his wife, Hillary, detonated a furor by complaining that President Bush had kept a mistress and had got away scot-free.

Apologies and contrition poured from the Clinton campaign yesterday after Mrs Clinton, who depicts herself as co-candidate for the presidency, attempted to extricate herself from remarks that provoked guffaws in the Big Apple but backfired in the hinterland. "It was a mistake," said Mrs Clinton. "I did not mean to be hurtful to anyone."

Mrs Clinton's gaffe came in an interview with *Vanity Fair* magazine in which she boiled over at what she sees as a double standard by the media: they mercilessly scrutinise the infidelities of her husband, who is alleged to have had an affair with Gennifer Flowers, while they have steered clear of old rumours about Mr Bush. These involved a British-born woman named Jennifer, aged 59, who now works for the State Department. The stories were denied when they briefly surfaced during the 1988 campaign. "They're gonna circle the wagons on Jennifer and all these other people," Mrs Clinton said, speaking of the establishment.

To the despair of the Clintons, the remarks have driven more serious matters out of the New York popular media days before the vote tomorrow.

Shamir pays high price to appease Levy

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S ruling Likud party yesterday narrowly averted a serious rift within its leadership, when David Levy, the foreign minister, withdrew his threat to resign after an eleven-hour compromise with Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister.

In a classic display of Israeli political brinkmanship, Mr Shamir and his mutinous deputy announced that they had patched up their differences only minutes before the weekly cabinet meeting at which Mr Levy had vowed to tender his resignation. "I am happy to announce to the cabinet members that we reached an agreement this morning in the dispute between us," Mr Shamir said. "The foreign minister will, of

course, continue his presence in the government."

However, party peace was bought at an expensive price for the Likud leader, who promised in writing that Mr Levy would remain foreign minister in the next government and would have the right to appoint a supporter of his choice to the cabinet. Mr Shamir also agreed to place Levy supporters in key government posts in the Knesset, Likud executive committees and to the board of the Jewish Agency, the quasi-governmental organisation responsible for Jewish immigration to Israel.

"I received everything I asked for," Mr Levy said at a press conference. "It was not a gift, it was what was due us,

what we deserved. It is only unfortunate that we had to take such action in order to secure it. We will have to work hard to heal the scars caused by this wound (in the party)."

Although Mr Shamir has succeeded, for the time being in papering over the differences in his party, Mr Levy correctly pointed out that serious divisions remain in the party as it approaches the general elections on June 23.

For instance, after the compromise was announced, Moshe Arens, the defence minister, who is Mr Levy's archrival in the battle to succeed Mr Shamir, described the concessions to the foreign minister as tantamount to "capitulation". He told his cabinet colleagues in an

angry outburst that the agreement had only caused further damage to the party.

The ruling party can ill-afford such public displays of disunity, particularly as an opinion poll released on Friday showed the opposition Labour party increasing its lead over Likud. The poll conducted for the Hebrew daily, *Haadashot*, said if elections were held today, Labour under its new leader, Yitzhak Rabin, would win 46 seats against Likud's 31. It also showed that Labour would be able to form a working coalition in the 120-seat Knesset.

Although Mr Levy's continued presence in the government might improve Likud's standing, particularly among his fellow Sephardi support-

ers of oriental descent, the week-long leadership row has left an unpleasant after-taste with many would-be Likud supporters.

"The big question is whether the damage inside Likud can be cured by the compromise," Reuven Rivlin, a Likud Knesset member and Levy supporter, said. "We have survived many crises in the past and I hope we can do it again. We believe in miracles here in Jerusalem — we have a direct line to God, it's a local call," he said.

● **Curfew lifted:** The Israeli army lifted a curfew on more than 120,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, four days after the army shot dead four Palestinians and wounded scores in Rafah. (Reuters)

TV elite in China get a touch of real life

Peking: Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, was shown yesterday on evening television news shovelling dirt and planting trees. The hard labour was not punishment for his recent failure to support the senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, but meant to show him as a man of the people (Catherine Sampson writes).

The public relations exercise dictated that he only had to be shown digging for a few seconds, before he was shown resting, as if exhausted. But for others, like the 100 employees of the state-run television station who were recently reported to have been sent to live with peasants in Liaoning province, the rural stint sounds like a bad joke. As city-bred yuppies, journalists and editors have no particular desire to rough it in the countryside. But they have no choice in the matter.

It was the late Chairman Mao who decided that those who were getting too big for their boots should be brought down to earth... literally, and thousands were sent to the countryside in the mid-1960s. The practice has been making a comeback after the backlash against the pro-democracy movement in 1989.

Loan expected

Peking: The World Bank is expected to provide China with its single largest loan of £285 million by next March to help it develop a national grain distribution network that would be governed by market forces, the *China Daily* reported. (AFP)

West defied

Havana: President Castro told young Communists here that Cuba would not destroy itself like the former Soviet Union and Cubans would rather die than accept capitalism. Cuba was committed to its one-party communist system, he said. (Reuters)

EC appeals

Ho Chi Minh City: The European Community is launching an appeal for donations to a £72 million scheme to help Vietnam take back up to 80,000 boat people from camps in Asia. The money will provide jobs, training and credit.

General chosen

Bangkok: General Suchinda Kraprayoon, nominated as Thailand's 19th prime minister, has been promised the full backing of the powerful army. He is thought to have engineered the coup which toppled the civilian government in 1991. (Reuters)

Sikh shot dead

Delhi: Gurkuch Singh, a minor Sikh politician belonging to the Akali Dal party, and six militants were among nine people shot dead in the Indian state of Punjab in separate acts of violence linked to the bloody Sikh separatist campaign. (AFP)

UN mediates

Dhaka: Jan Eliasson, the UN undersecretary-general, held talks with Bangladeshi and Burmese officials to resolve the problem of 200,000 Muslims who have fled Burma. A refugee leader said they would return only if Rangoon gave them citizenship. (AFP)

Killers sought

Lagos: Hundreds of university students and schoolgirls protested against the ritual killings of 17 women in two city, the capital of Osun state in southwest Nigeria. The authorities promised that the culprits would be found and punished. (AP)

A vote against the Eighties

Punishment of the Tories is the key electoral factor, argues Peter Riddell

Yesterday morning I spent an hour or so with a canvasser touring a council owned block of flats in north London a couple of hundred yards from Highgate cemetery, where Karl Marx is buried. The response was not bad for Labour once you adjusted for people out, not coming to their doors or still in bed. Glenda Jackson should be confident.

But I wondered what the old sage would have thought. I did not get the impression from this or previous outings that today's workers share Marx's view of their lot, that they have nothing to lose but their chains, and a world to gain. Faster action to modernise the flats and end the sharing of bathrooms and lavatories by four households would help, but present-day workers are not expecting a revolution.

If Labour becomes the largest single party this Thursday, it will mainly be a negative judgment by voters on the Tories, not an endorsement of a radical programme. Labour leaders are in danger of being misled into exaggerating the electoral

'Too often Mr Major talks like a minister; a Treasury accountant rather than a political leader'

enthusiasm. Thursday's performance certainly looks like being the party's best since October 1974, if not 1970, with a rise of a quarter in votes cast since 1987. No wonder local canvassers are delighted and morale is high. But Labour's total vote has slipped since the start of the campaign and there is little of the sense of an exciting new beginning evident in 1945 and 1964. It is much more "get the Tories out".

The Tories could still be the largest single party in a hung parliament. But even if they are, the party will still have lost the argument for much of the campaign. Continual carping about Conservative Central Office by former media advisers and disgruntled candidates misses the point. Shooting the messenger is always more fun than thinking about the message. The Conservatives' weaknesses are less to do with mistakes made during the campaign than with their having been in power for 13 years. The Tories started from a weak position.

In many ways Labour's most powerful poster was its early one, "If they can't get it right in 13 years, they never will". Grievances have built up since 1979 among all kinds of special interests. It was never going to be easy for the Tories to win a fourth term, but the timing could not have been worse. The long recession, and associated difficulties in the housing market, have come as a shock, especially to those in the south who never expected to lose their jobs, or become afraid of doing so. They are the people who feel let down by the government, in spite of all its earlier achievements in taming the unions and reducing inflation.

In so far as there is a mood for change it reflects these doubts and a belief that Labour is the better party to tackle the present priorities of health and education. But

neither from the polls nor anecdotal do I get any sense that expectations are high about what a Labour government might achieve. That is why voters still express reservations about Neil Kinnock as a potential prime minister, and about what Labour would do in office.

If Labour has succeeded during the campaign in offsetting some of these doubts with its simple "time for a change" theme, the Tories have failed to offer a similar coherence. Given the inherent difficulties of the recession and the poll tax, the Tories needed to offer a positive justification for a fourth term. As I argued three weeks ago, endless attacks on Labour over tax and emphasis on John Major's personal decency would not be enough. This is not just a matter of presentational tactics. The message has often been muddled when

lengthy statements by Mr Major on his vision for the 1990s — broadening ownership and choice for more people, the "open-door society" — have been heavily overshadowed by simultaneous Tory attacks on the other parties.

The real Tory difficulty is the more fundamental one of redefining itself in the aftermath of Margaret Thatcher. Are voters being offered a continuation of the old regime under younger management or a new government with different priorities? Part of the Tories' quandary is that Mr Major often thinks and behaves like a chief whip, conciliating and minimising differences. These qualities have made him an adept leader both of his cabinet and of Tory MPs over the past 16 months. He has successfully avoided splits over the replacement of the poll tax and over Europe. Mr Major has proved to be an impressive prime minister.

But his political skills have not produced a coherent vision for the 1990s. Compromise blurs rather than clarifies. Too often Mr Major talks like a minister; a Treasury accountant offering sensible suggestions rather than a political leader inspiring his followers. Only in the past few days has he started, at a news conference on Saturday and in his interview yesterday with David Frost, to talk eloquently about the importance of threats to the constitution from proposals on Scottish devolution, proportional representation and European union.

The need for strong government based on the Westminster parliament is a very traditional Conservative theme. And constitutional issues may have a central place in the politics of the 1990s. But I am not sure that the electorate is yet listening; it is still more concerned with punishing the Tories for the failures of the 1980s.

Country music's ascendancy represents a new US national mood, says Charles Bremner

Stand by your twang

Mention country and western music and a set of images probably springs to mind: cowboys, twangy guitars and corby lines about whisky, cheating, hurtin' and truck drivin'. Unless you have been in America lately, you might not expect expatriates of the genre to equate their work with Renaissance minstrelsy or to find professors lecturing on the existential angst of an opus that includes titles such as "Your Daddy Ain't in Heaven, He's in Houston" or "She's Azzin' Single and I'm Drinkin' Doubles". They are doing so because country music has surged over the past two or three years from a minority cult, enjoyed mainly by lowerbrow older whites of the heartlands, to become the dominant mainstream musical form, a veritable soundtrack for America in the 1990s.

Country has enjoyed boom in the past, but never has it taken over the mainstream as it is doing now, embraced by everyone from urban teenagers to the Connecticut-bred George Bush, who claims that his bedside radio wakes him awake with it. A working knowledge of country music is essential for all the contenders trying to take over the Bush homestead on Pennsylvania Avenue. Bill Clinton's team is still trying to calm fans angered when Hillary, his wife, cast an aspersions on Tammy Wynette, the country queen. To define her independent spirit, Mrs Clinton made the mistake of saying she was no passive little woman "like Tammy Wynette just standin' by my man".

What is it that is driving millions of Japanese-car-owning Americans, who live a thousand miles from cactus or bluegrass, to see their lives in such songs as "I am just a Country Road that You Keep Turnin' Down" or "Your Wife's been Cheatin' on Us Again". The answer, according to the practitioners and guardians of the zeitgeist, is simple. Country music represents a yearning by a depressed and ageing population for a return to a humane popular music, one that tells stories of ordinary life. For the jaded, baby-boom American there is not much solace or emotional truth left in the anthems of the Sixties and even

less in the antics of Madonna and current pop hits with titles such as "I Wanna Sex You Up". According to Bill Ivey, director of the Country Music Foundation, the extraordinary popularity of country shows that Americans have realised that they are "going to have to live like grown-ups". In one among a welter of recent analyses, *Forbes* magazine said the phenomenon "suggests that American popular culture is taking a new, healthier direction".

This is not to suggest that Americans have taken to seeing themselves as lonesome divorcees swigging tequila at truck-stops. Country has adapted to the new age of abstemious and gone suburban. Turn on one of the country television networks or radio stations and you will find warnings of the dangers of drink and hymns to the joys of marriage in songs such as Travis Tritt's "The Whiskey Ain't Workin'" and "Two of a Kind Workin' on a Full House", a hit by Garth Brooks, the present

superstar. Even when alcohol does enter the picture, the hero no longer knocks back the Old Granddaddy but can be found "sippin' some wine from a coffee cup". As enamoured as they are of the hokey old wordplay, some of the singers are fluent with cultural references. John Lincoln Wright, whose recent album is called *Honkytonk Vêrité*, says country music is like popular painting: "It's Norman Rockwell and Andrew Wyeth, but it's not Chagall."

Another sure measure of country power can be seen in the arrival of Sony as a force in Nashville and also in the emergence of Clevie Francis as a popular singer. He is not only unusual for being black in a mainly white business, but because until last year he was a cardiologist. He swapped his stethoscope for a guitar at 46 because he realised we were all only "one second away from death".

Such sentiments qualify him well for all the "bleedin' heart" songs that still crowd the country

repertoire. Despite the new sensibility, many of the old conventions remain, allowing Americans whose most macho act is a drive to the shopping centre to see themselves as rugged loners wielding sardonic metaphors against the malice of fate. Mr Brooks has made millions by crossing the yuppie blues with the myths of old. One minute he is lamenting marital discord in the suburbs: "We Bury the Hatchet, but Leave the Handle Suckin' Out". A song later, he is back to the tale of a jealous truck drivin' daddy: "Mama's in the Graveyard, Papa's in the Pen [intentional]".

Sniff as they might, there is little that the arbiters of the avant-garde can do about this lunge for the lowbrow. For the moment, the culturally hip have been joining them rather than beating them, adopting cowboy boots and pickup trucks for their outings in Greenwich Village. However, most are aware that the country boom is a rallying cry for middle America against the coasts. Waylon Jennings, dean of the outlaw school of country, gives sarcastic voice to this in his new record, entitled: "I'm Too Dumb for New York City and Too Ugly for L.A."

They come to bury history

Bernard Levin
lays a curse on the Japanese trying to tidy up one of life's mysteries

The names of Mallory and Irvine have gone into history. They were the two mountaineers, members of the 1924 Everest expedition, who died in the assault on the then unconquered peak. Some experts, including other members of the team, believe that the two heroes did succeed in reaching the crown, but had left too little time to return to safety, and fell to their deaths as darkness descended; some years later, an ice axe was found on a slope, reinforcing the hypothesis of a fatal stumble. No epitaph could improve on Mallory's words: asked by a non-mountaineer why they wanted to climb Everest, he replied, "Because it's there".

So it is, and so are they, buried for ever beneath the eternal snows, a fitting tomb. But a few years ago a Japanese expedition set out for Everest; they naturally wanted to climb the giant, but they had what they called a "primary objective", which was to search for the bodies of Mallory and Irvine. I can find no further news of the Japanese climbers, and I have had a struggle with myself not to hope that they fell off and broke their necks. For if that is what they wanted to search Everest for, I cannot think of a more exact definition of sacrifice.

Not long ago I reported, in something close to rage, that fragments of bone and tissue which were found when Abraham Lincoln was shot, and which had been fittingly housed in the appropriate museum, were to be examined by "researchers" (recte busybodies) to discover whether his genes were responsible for his great height and gangling movements. I don't know how that bit of grave-robbing came out in the end, either: a tasteful lynching



would have fired the bill. But now another expedition is in progress to defile the dead, and this one, I think, is the worst, though the dead in this case were never alive.

In November 1989 I wrote here about my visit to Easter Island: it was among the most moving and memorable experiences of my life. To wander among those mighty figures, which hundreds of years ago proudly ringed the tiny island, only to be overturned in some unauthorised catastrophe, provided me with a memory which will live with me until I die.

Yet now I read that another cabal of grave-robbers, Japanese again, are going to Easter Island to examine the figures with a view to seeing if they can be dug out of the earth in which they have been embedded for (archaeologists differ) at least 350 years, possibly more than 1,200, and re-erected.

And what makes this invasion of the giant stone cemetery much worse is that the Chilean govern-

ment (Easter Island is a Chilean dependency) has given the Japanese nose-pickers permission and encouragement, instead of telling them to take their otiose and wicked proposal and drop it down the crater of Mount Fuji.

Wicked? Let me make good that claim. Those astounding figures, some weighing hundreds of tons, were placed round the island for a purpose that can never now be known. Whether they were tutelary deities, or stylised memorials to their ancestors, or an art-form, or guardians of the island — any guess is as good or bad as any other. Their overthrow was apparently abrupt; there were figures in the quarries ready to be taken to their places; there were half-finished figures that were abandoned; there were figures left partly in their rightful plinth. In one moment, the years upon years that had been — must have been — devoted to quarrying, carving and siting them, came to an end. Then

centuries took over; the volcanic rock slowly ground the fallen figures into the earth; it was a truly profound experience to sit among those immobile faces and bodies, and to speculate fruitlessly as to who were the builders and carvers. And why, having built and carved with such pain, sweat and purpose, they utterly undid the work of their hands.

Can you think of a better reason to leave Easter Island alone, and above all to leave the figures where they fell? The builders had no modern tools, and indeed practically no ancient ones either. Yet the blocks of stone from which the plinths are made have been fitted together so finely that it is impossible to get a knife-blade of pestilent trespassers, encouraged by the Chilean authorities, want to drag the figures upright and lumber them on to the great platforms which were their resting places. Is there no reverence for death

left in our world? If a man is dead and buried, can he not now lie easy for the thought that some clown, armed with a permission, will come and dig him up to measure his ears, elbows and knees in support of a meaningless theory? And that is no exaggeration, much less a joke; have you forgotten the creature who demanded the opening of Shakespeare's tomb in the quest for proof that Bacon wrote the works of the impostor?

I asked if there was any reverence for death, but there is another question in this matter: is there any reverence for the past itself? And if there is, should the past be left alone with its years or centuries? Easter Island does, literally, inspire awe; do you suppose that when the tidy experts ("experts", forsooth, in the unknown and unknowable) have done their work, and put all the statues in perfectly straight lines, not forgetting to replace with a carefully measured nose a figure that had lost its original in the *dies irae*, and when they have aligned all the platforms and placed all the statues neatly on them, lowering them carefully with the most advanced make of cranes, and when they have tidily given them a good scraping and a final polish — do you think, then, that there will be any room for awe on Easter Island?

Leave Mallory and Irvine alone; leave Lincoln alone; leave even Bacon alone; and do, do, do leave Easter Island and its mysteries alone. You cannot solve them; every possible notion has been pressed into service, and no explorer of any of them has finished wiser than he started. We do not know who these people were, nor what they meant by the statues they made, nor why they one day destroyed them.

And why should we know? To diminish the world's mysteries and replace them by lifeless certainties? To leave no stone unturned, not even one? To proclaim that knowledge is all, so that we need not seek understanding? If you must dig up something, gentlemen, go dig up the tombs of your ancestors. But if you dig up Easter Island, may Tutankhamun's curse fall upon you, together with one of the heaviest of the statues. Desist; and be awed.



...and moreover
MATTHEW PARRIS

Why look in the crystal ball when you can read the book? Neil Kinnock remarked to a fortune teller recently. Indeed, but why read the book when you can sample the menu? In an attempt to gather auguries for Thursday, I have obtained the favourite recipe of each of the three main party leaders.

I did so under deep cover. Requesting a signed copy of the recipe to raise funds for a good cause, I omitted in my letter the name of the cause and — I do confess — failed to acknowledge that I am not registered for charity. But in every case my request received a personal response. I should like to thank the three leaders for their efforts, which touched me. They must have so much on their plates. I also admit that my name is not Christopher Hope. I was less than frank.

But it is unwitting testimony that reveals most. I did not want John Major to be on guard when telling me about his bacon risotto. I preferred Paddy Ashdown to be frank about his tuna bake. And it was important that, setting out his plans for roast Welsh lamb, Mr Kinnock suspected nothing.

I do think roast lamb is a cop-out. What does it reveal about a politician when his favourite dish turns out to be something he didn't invent, create or put together himself — but took, ready-made, from its own mother, coated with a little garnish and plonked straight into the oven? Mr Kinnock also

suggested that it would improve the package to smear it with a little honey first. Ho-hum, eh? And why Welsh lamb, eh? What's wrong with English lamb? Does this signal future strains in Labour's relations with New Zealand? Suspicions were reinforced by the Labour leader's decision to offer advice on temperature settings first in continental measure.

Most worrying, however, is the question of cost. Mr Kinnock's dish was by far the most expensive of the three. Lamb is not cheap. Where's the money going to come from? On this, as on so much else, my recipe is silent. I pronounce the dish tempting but unoriginal and essentially uncosted.

Anxiety mounts on turning to Mr Major's risotto. Did it have to be bacon? Bang goes Finchley and Golders Green. To add, in a footnote, that if bacon is not preferred, ham will always do, was quite uncalled for. Braggish, moreover, will notice the choice not only of a foreign dish but of a gratuitous Italian name for it, too. Would not the plain English "chopped bacon with rice" do? Eurofanatics will be disappointed that Mr Major sits on the fence between a Celsius and Fahrenheit oven, and chooses the hob.

And the rice. C2s do not eat much rice. C2s associate rice with ethnic food. What's wrong with mashed potato? In a subtle, subliminal way, what "bacon risotto" is saying to me is "I am not racially prejudiced. I am wobbly on Israel, and I go to the

opera". This is not the way to win an election.

And there is a broader, more philosophical question about this risotto. A risotto contains small quantities of good things chopped into little pieces: but a risotto has no theme. There is no shape to a risotto. A risotto lacks coherence. Nothing about a risotto leaps out and says to you: "This is what I am; this is what I stand for; this is what I'm all about" as, for instance, a kipper might. You never know quite where you stand with a risotto. It is almost impossible to imagine circumstances in which one would emit a great, primitive cry: "What I really want is a risotto!" Individual elements of a risotto may be admirable, but the whole dish is not frankly going anywhere. I am worried about John.

Paddy's recipe is very clever. Tipicose carefully between the susceptibilities of every diner, it gives offence in no quarter. "Tuna bake", requiring little more than a tin of tuna and some potatoes, is easily the cheapest of the three: the Lib Dem culinary message is addressed to rich and poor alike. To choose fish nods in the direction of vegetarian sensitivities without succumbing to the vegan stereotype; the whole dish has a simplicity and straightforwardness of purpose that must appeal to all.

But it is the footnote by the word "tuna" in the ingredients list that so impresses us. "Check on the tin," says Paddy, "that the tuna is dolphin-friendly."

Mandelson on stand-by

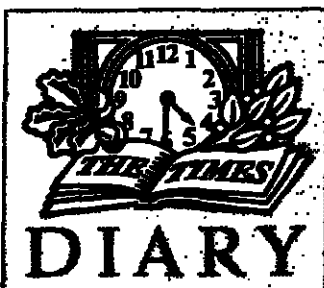
ONE OF the many tricky decisions pending for Neil Kinnock as he begins to think about the possibility of life in Downing Street is what to do with Peter Mandelson.

Kinnock is keen to reward Mandelson, one of the principal architects of Labour's revival, by having him at his side after a Labour victory. But an immediate promotion to the frontbench for the candidate for Harlepool is virtually ruled out by both party and Whitehall protocol. The civil service would be hostile to the appointment of a minister without prior parliamentary experience. So would large sections of the Labour benches, including frontbenchers such as Michael Meacher and John Prescott, with whom Mandelson fell out when he was the party's campaign director.

The Labour leader, however, is considering an ingenious solution: appointing Mandelson his PPS. If Mandelson was given the job few doubt that he would rapidly turn it into one of the most powerful posts in the leader's team. Kinnock's present PPS is Adam Ingram, a Scot whose services would be much in demand in an expanded Scottish Office.

Mandelson would have access to affairs of state from which he would otherwise be excluded, would accompany Kinnock on foreign trips, and would be almost constantly at the side of Charles Clarke, the man tipped to head Kinnock's private office.

"It is the one job he could do where his lack of parliamentary experience would not matter," says a Labour man. "It would allow him to operate at the centre of events without treading on everyone's toes."



In the event of a Kinnock government, the Mandelson-Clarke axis would mean something of a reunion. The two were close colleagues in student politics in the late 1970s. They also lived in neighbouring streets as children, although neither knew it until their paths crossed again at university.

With three days to go a variety of misleading, mendacious and ludicrous leaflets are landing on voters' doorsteps. Can any constituency exceed the tally of 13 errors in the missive sent out for Peter Telford, Labour's man in Plymouth Drake? Post, fax, phone your most horrible examples to us by Wednesday and the Diary will award its prizes on polling day.

Soap box

THE ARCHERS are showing impressive political foresight, thanks to some shrewd thinking by Vanessa Whitburn, the programme's editor. Addicts will be able to hear all about Ambridge's day at the polls on Thursday even though the programme was recorded before John Major announced the election. Whitburn explains the trick. "We just guessed the prime minister would go for April 9 and slipped in a couple of references that could

have been deftly removed with the help of a razor blade."

There will even be a reference to the winner during Friday evening's programme although it was recorded last month. "I have lined up a writer and actors to do a last minute addition," Whitburn says.

So who was responsible for John Major's speech last night, which was markedly more impressive than anything he has uttered so far on the campaign trail? "He wrote it entirely himself," Central Office says.

Tartan taunt

THE SCOTTISH Nationalists have infiltrated the campaign of Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Office minister, quite literally. They have moved in above Forsyth's campaign office.

Rubbing nationalist salt in the Tory wound, they have draped a banner above the Tory headquarters stating: "End the Forsyth Saga." Forsyth, who first won the Stirling seat in 1983 and is defending a majority of only 548, has riposted with a banner saying: "Coming Soon: Forsyth III."

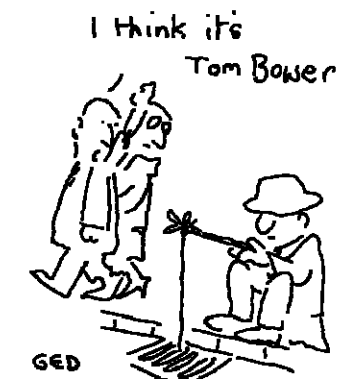
Forsyth's agent, Simon Turner, thought the Tories had gained the upper hand. "Their banner is rather scruffy, unlike ours. It blew down today. Ours has remained firmly in place. Just like Michael Forsyth will on polling day."

Tom on Tiny

THE MAN who dared to uncover the murky side of Robert Maxwell long before his death has now turned his attention to that other entrepreneurial titan, Tiny Rowland. Tom Bower, who was hounded through the courts by Maxwell when he published his unauthorised biography, promises a "warts and all" look at the man

once derided by Edward Heath as the "unacceptable face of capitalism". Bower says: "I will be fair and objective. I will try to uncover the truth because Rowland is a man who tries to shroud his activities."

Bower does at least have a certain admiration for Rowland, which was hardly the case with



Maxwell. "I think he is a remarkable man and really has created wealth for this country. Ted Heath is wrong on many things."

After last week's publication of the Department of Transport's enquiry into the sinking of the Titanic the 80th anniversary of the tragedy will be celebrated on April 14 with the world's largest sale of Titanic memorabilia by Onslow's. More than 250 lots include letters salvaged by survivors, and four sets of the fateful voyage, and four sets of keys to the ship's main rooms from the pocket of survivor Samuel Fleming, the ship's Lamp Trimmer. Most poignant is a letter written on board by a first-class passenger, Adolphe Saafield. "But for a slight vibration you see, it says."

When Lord the sculptor 1801 his great treasure smashed an enclaves 1 statues from aim, for £36 Mr Kinnock last week Marbles is promise he for the arts, case is esser who less than been removed from a V English arts Greeks, our We Greeks When Ely was a town of the Onslow a city where viewed by a British M. custodian of displaying modern art will be care close to the For the G resonance; cultural uni Greece's C marbles to than it is to British Mus responsibility and to reoun floodgates of



PADDY'S BLACKMAIL

The opinion polls are suggesting that by this Friday Paddy Ashdown will be kingmaker. He has spent the weekend saying that he will only make king after this election one who is prepared to defer to Lib-Dem kingmaking after every future election, in other words one who promises proportional representation.

There is no justification for this blackmail, which both main parties have more or less indicated they will resist. Mr Ashdown claims that the message of the electorate in a hung parliament is electoral reform. This is not only nonsense — for that to be the message, the Liberal Democrats would need to have a thumping majority — but it throws away the advantage that they might otherwise gain from a hung parliament.

Public signalling between the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties has started in earnest presaging what would happen during every election were there to be proportional representation in Britain. In the case of the Conservatives, it promptly stopped again on John Major's declaration that he would have nothing to do with PR. Labour is more equivocal. Mr Ashdown has insisted categorically that the larger party must first agree to include a binding commitment to legislate for PR in the Queen's Speech. The best Labour has to offer is a commission, which might eventually propose PR, or might not.

In a hung parliament the first duty of the leader of the largest party will be to talk to some of the smaller parties about the terms of their support, the object being a deal on a government, whether fully fledged coalition or not, that can win a parliamentary majority. First conversations may be with various nationalists. Mr Ashdown's insistence on proportional representation as a "non-negotiable precondition" seems certain to exclude him from this preliminary wheeling and dealing. Having spurned his non-negotiable deal on Friday, either Labour or Conservative leaderships will have to devise a

Queen's Speech that exploits the wider political battlefield to its advantage.

Initiative then passes to them. The Tories might turn to Ulster. In Labour's case Scottish and Welsh assemblies, with PR for them and for local and European elections, would be high on the list, making it almost impossible for Scottish Lib Dem MPs to vote the Speech down without risking annihilation at the hands of nationalists in any ensuing snap election. Liberal Democrats would have either to acquiesce in a big-party government by not voting down its measures, or suffer the agony of forcing a second election at which they would certainly do worse.

Mr Ashdown's refusal to soften his demand on PR is now the obstacle in the way of the rest of what he wants. He said yesterday he seeks a coalition, with a seat for himself and a couple of colleagues in the cabinet. He wants negotiation between the coalition partners to decide on a programme, and he talks of such a government surviving four or five years. He has begun to hint at what else he might insist on — such as the amelioration of Labour's "swinging tax rates" — as the price of his participation.

The public may be tempted to think that a Lib-Lab pact or coalition presents the best way of ousting the Tories after a lacklustre campaign, and so vote for the Liberal Democrats in the hope of achieving it. Such a prospect might appeal to a party that has long been relegated to the status of also-ran. But Mr Ashdown is in danger of putting that at risk in pursuit of something he calls "fair voting" but which most people will regard as unfair leverage for him. The irresponsibility of this leverage is plain within the politically unstable nations that already use proportional representation. Britain has been given a hint of such chaos in Mr Ashdown's antics over the past few days. He has fought a lively campaign. He has not justified a claim to participate in the councils of government.

RETREAT FROM MAASTRICHT

In the past four months, Britain's political standing in the rest of Europe has undergone a reversal. It is one the voters might care to note on Thursday. Ostensibly the odd man out (though not in private) at the Maastricht summit last year, John Major is today enjoying an unexpected popularity on the Continent as an effective European.

Mr Major has not changed his views. What has happened is that Europe's other leaders have shifted steadily towards him. Whichever party wins the election, Britain will almost certainly ratify the Maastricht treaty before any of its EC partners. A bill will be ready to be presented to Parliament before the summer recess and will probably be voted through in the early autumn.

The British preference for arguing fiercely about European matters, negotiating toughly and then honouring the resulting settlement arouses acute envy in continental states where no such process obtains. Mr Jacques Delors fulsomely praised the vigour of Britain's Maastricht debate the other day on French television. *Les Britanniques*, he insisted, had the most open-minded debate to be found in the entire Community. He has reason to worry. No sooner was the ink dry on the treaty and noisy dispute about federalism stilled than the EC slithered into querulous gloom.

Most striking of all has been the sharp change of mood in Germany. At Maastricht Chancellor Kohl was the confident manufacturer of the final fudge. Now he and his ministers are having to defend several European fronts at once. The Bundesbank issues a stream of sceptical warnings about the economic risks of a single currency to which Germany and ten other states are now committed by the treaty. Editorials lament the prospective abolition of the deutschmark. Britain's option to escape monetary union, bitterly criticised by Labour and by other

Europeans at Maastricht, is now admired by many Germans. Germany could yet find a way of not joining the single currency.

In France, economic and monetary union (EMU) remains popular for precisely this reason, to give Paris some leverage through a European Central Bank over German bankers. But conservative politicians such as Jacques Chirac are arming themselves for a guerrilla campaign in the courts and on the hustings against the Maastricht treaty clause which gives all EC citizens rights to vote in local and European elections wherever they live. Politicians from Lisbon to Leipzig only woke up to the importance of this clause after the treaty talks closed. An electoral earthquake is likely in Luxembourg, where 10 per cent of the 400,000 population are Portuguese immigrants.

Referendums are certain in Ireland and Denmark. Ireland's new prime minister Albert Reynolds has to propose a revision of Ireland's "abortion protocol", which combines the national ban on abortion with an Irish citizen's freedom to go abroad to have an abortion if she chooses. Redrafting is proving hard and the referendum campaign will be rough. In Denmark the campaign is already underway and the opinion polls suggest that the treaty may not be approved.

Leaders who brushed aside Mr Major's Maastricht pleas to "look at the details" are living to rue the day. Public and economic opinion is now able to study the details and see what economic and political union means for industrial costs, for ethnic minorities, for border controls, for tax and social policy. Treaties are important things, not lightly to be entered into and not to be made irreversible. A proper scepticism towards EMU is due from Labour and Liberal Democrats as well as from the Tories at this election. That at least would be in line with "European opinion".

RETURN THE MARBLES

When Lord Elgin embarked upon removing the sculptures from the Parthenon after 1801 his intention was to save one of the great treasures of the ancient world for posterity. The marbles had been plundered, smashed and used as building material for centuries. Lord Elgin legally shipped the statues from Athens and sold them to Britain, for £36,000, just half his total expenses.

Mr Kinnock's remarks to Sir Robin Day last week that "the place for the Elgin Marbles is in the Parthenon", repeated a promise he made to a former Greek minister for the arts, Melina Mercouri, in 1985. His case is essentially the same as Lord Byron's, who less than ten years after the marbles had been removed heard a prophetic remark from a Western-educated Greek: "You English are carrying off the works of the Greeks, our forefathers. Preserve them well. We Greeks will come and redeem them."

When Elgin removed the marbles Athens was a town of just 10,000, an obscure corner of the Ottoman empire. He brought them to a city where they would be looked after and viewed by a large and interested public. The British Museum has proved an ideal custodian of the statues, caring for them and displaying them in a handsome gallery. In modern Athens the authorities promise they will be carefully preserved in a new gallery close to the Parthenon.

For the Greeks the marbles have a unique resonance; the Parthenon is a symbol of the cultural unity and continuity of their nation: Greece's Crown Jewels. The value of the marbles to Greece is incomparably greater than it is to the British. Yet the Trustees of the British Museum have long argued that their responsibility to preserve them is inalienable and to return them to Greece would open the floodgates of endless demands for the return

of cultural artefacts that would leave their display cases bare.

There is a clear distinction between valuable artefacts and treasures of intense national significance. If historians and antiquarians cannot tell the difference, then somebody else should do so for them. There are few objects so closely bound up with a nation's sense of identity as the marbles. (The Ashmolean regalia also hoarded by the British Museum is another case in point.) St Stephen's Crown has been returned from America to Hungary. If by break of history the Stone of Scone was held abroad the Scots would rightly assert a claim.

The Elgin Marbles have been well cared for by Britain, but other ancient objects have fared less well. Cleopatra's Needle, the 1500 BC obelisk, stands unprotected on the Embankment under constant attack from motor fumes and other pollution. "Cleopatra's Needle" should be in a museum in Cairo, says the Egyptian embassy's cultural councillor. The moral claim to be a rich treasure-house of art from throughout the world must rest upon a commitment to conserve and properly display.

Why in any case should the art of a nation be incarcerated in one place for all time, at home or abroad? The best museums of the future will be those prepared to clear out their cellars, trade their objects and improve their collections. Nothing is more stifling than the fashion for treating collections as fixed and permanent. It has made museums moribund, their collections augmented only when they can squeeze money out of governments to pay soaring prices for a dwindling stock of artefacts. In the realm of art nowhere is more hogwash talked than on this topic. The marbles should be returned and the cobwebs of museum curatorship swept aside.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Consequences of minimum wage and higher tax rate

From the Chairman of the British Clothing Industry Association

Sir, It is widely suggested that all our competitor countries in the EC have a national minimum wage. On the contrary, according to information from the CBI, Income Data Services and the Community itself, only six out of the 12 EC countries have a specific national minimum wage — namely, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. In the other EC countries there is a mixture of legally enforceable collective agreements, statutory provisions for certain groups and no statutory measures at all.

Even those countries which do have a national minimum wage exclude certain categories of workers. The UK is not the odd one out.

A national minimum of £3.40 per hour would be disastrous for those sectors of the UK economy covered by wages councils. Wages council orders cover over four million people.

In the clothing industry, for example, payment systems are generally incentive-based and the vast majority of workers already earn in excess of £3.40 an hour. A national minimum of that level would dramatically reduce the incentive element and force employers to increase total wages to retain productivity and output. This could increase the wage bill by as much as 25 per cent.

Such an increase could be recovered by our customers, the retailers, paying more and in turn passing the increase onto their customers. That would be highly inflationary. In practice retailers, who are also directly affected by the national minimum wage proposal, would substitute imports for their UK supplies, at the cost of British jobs. These jobs losses are likely to run into tens of thousands — surely a terrible price to pay for Labour's national proposed minimum wage policy.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES MACADAM, Chairman,
British Clothing Industry
Association Ltd.,
7 Swallow Place, W1,
April 5.

From Mrs John Astor

Sir, As Peter Riddell rightly says ("Where Labour is vulnerable", March 30) the real issue of this election is the recession and it will turn in the balance between blaming the Tories for the recession and doubts about a Labour government.

Both the Labour and Liberal Democrats propose to "kick start" the economy with an "emergency package". Surely it was the emergency action taken by Nigel Lawson (together with other countries) after "Black Monday" that triggered the boom leading to runaway inflation, high interest rates, thus (as can be seen in retrospect) aggravating the present recession.

Luckily the Conservatives have learnt the lesson and are not proposing dramatic action, having put into place prudent measures last November which are slowly beginning to take effect.

Neither of the other parties have learnt anything from this mistake and are apparently ready to start this wretched cycle all over again. They can't blame the Tories for taking action then and blame them now for not taking action.

Yours faithfully,
MINNIE ASTOR,
Paxmire House,
Peasemore,
Newbury, Berkshire.
March 30.

From Mr R. Willmot-Smith

Sir, The election campaign is being fought against the background of a £28 billion deficit in public-sector finance, which is deteriorating as revenues fall from collapsing company profits and unemployment, among other things. There is an equally alarming balance of payments deficit.

Whoever is elected may have to raise taxes substantially in order to meet, or credibly finance, the deficit. They may also have to make visible and painful cuts in public expenditure.

However, the political parties seem to be making promises founded

upon the premise that they can more or less sustain the present tax levels and improve public services by increasing expenditure. The possibility of a government having both to raise taxes and make severe public expenditure cuts is not addressed.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD WILMOT-SMITH,
39 Essex Street, WC2,
April 3.

From Mrs F. M. de Burgh Mound

Sir, We are one of the "well off" families in the South-East on whom Neil Kinnock intends to impose his 50 per cent taxation policy. Thereby, instead of improving the standard of living for the poorly paid, he will merely reduce us all to the lowest common denominator.

This is how a 10 per cent increase in higher-rate taxation and the lifting of the National Insurance cap would affect us:

A good friend who helps clean the house and iron will have to go, although she badly needs the money.

The building work we were planning to do on the house will be cancelled. Part of the work was to be done by a friend whose local building business is already experiencing hard times.

The gardener who was to come and work on a garden sadly neglected for ten years will no longer have the job — a young man who will undoubtedly see more and more work dry up in the area.

We will no longer be able to afford to give business to local restaurants, pubs, riding stables, clothes and book shops. Our son will not be going to the local private school.

This is no exaggeration of how we shall have to drastically cut back and there will be thousands more like us all over the country. The "knock-on" effect of Neil Kinnock's frightfully naive policies will be disastrous.

Yours faithfully,
F. M. DE BURGH MOUND,
The Old Ale House,
Axford, Headley,
Hampshire,
March 30.

Political shyness on world poverty

From the Director of Christian Aid

Sir, The Labour and Liberal Democratic parties have each given us detailed and enlightened responses to some serious questions about world poverty which we and five other leading aid agencies raised through your correspondence columns on March 20. You, Sir, have also published shorter replies from Labour (Mrs Chwyd, March 25) and the Conservatives (Mrs Chalker, April 3). Why then are the parties so shy about voicing their concerns to the electorate?

Is it, as leading churchmen have suggested in relation to urban decay (letter, March 31), the lack of social and ethical vision? Does this lack of vision extend further, to a failure to address the root causes of a world increasingly out of kilter, whether in terms of the environment or endemic divisions between rich and poor? Or is it simply about not taking the electorate seriously enough?

The responses we received from the Liberal Democrats and Labour would make me conclude that neither of those parties are without vision. In relation to world poverty many of the issues are well understood and well defined and there are some sensible suggestions for ways forward. But to what extent can commitments to future action be taken seriously when, like urban decay, they do not even begin to feature in the daily media jamboree?

The tragedy of current electioneering is the extent to which it assumes no sensitivity on the part of the electorate to the other priorities that exist beyond our own pockets and our own lives. Yet the same electorate constantly shows through its response to charitable and other needs, as well as opinion polls on broader social issues, that it has a clear vision and is actually interested in investing in a better world for all. Why don't the parties seize on this and challenge us to be true to our better selves?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL TAYLOR, Director,
Christian Aid,
PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

Party commitments

From Sir Fitzroy Maclean

Sir, More than once over the years the Labour party has, on coming to power, fulfilled a number of its commitments. Under clause four of its constitution it is still, as far as I know, expressly committed to nationalising the means of production, distribution and exchange, in other words to turning this country into a socialist state. This at a time when most countries (with the exception of Castro's Cuba) are turning their backs on socialism.

If in fact the present leaders of the Labour party have finally jettisoned socialism, along with so much else that was once dear to them, might it not be better for them to say so and adjust their constitution accordingly? At least the electors would then know where they stood.

Yours faithfully,
FITZROY MACLEAN,
Strachur House,
Strachur, Argyll,
April 1.

Attacks on Kinnock

From Mrs M. G. Pattison

Sir, One of the most unpleasant aspects of the election campaign is the personal and often vicious attacks against Mr Neil Kinnock made by Mr John Major and many other senior members of the Conservative party. A lesser man would have buckled under such an onslaught.

Mr Kinnock does not need a soapbox to increase his stature.

Yours faithfully,
M. G. PATTISON,
1 Hemden Gardens, West End,
Southampton, Hampshire,
March 31.

the tiger becomes exhausted. The dogs head it off and the men begin to overtake it. They prepare to pin it down with their stout wooden forks".

The photographs, 53 years apart, have one thing in common: humans are tormenting a terrified animal to make money. And the part of your caption that really sticks in the throat is: "sent to zoos around the world for breeding purposes", since the Ussuri tiger obviously manages to breed in Siberia without such fine altruism.

Yours faithfully,
RONALD BALAAAM,
83 Overdale, Ashstead, Surrey.

BDs in EL

From Mr Graham Bird

Sir, As an interested observer of the ever-changing English language (EL), I note with concern the rapid spread of unnecessary bracketed abbreviations (UBAs) and pointless hyphens (PHs). If these features continue to proliferate at their present rate (PR), I predict that by the end-of-the-decade, almost every phrase will be pointlessly hyphenated-and-unecessarily-abbreviated (PHUAU'd). And this-is-to-say-nothing of that other curious phenomenon (CP), the widespread-insertion-of-redundant-apostrophe's (RA's) into many plurals. Can you confirm, Sir, that these bizarre developments (BD's) are true sign's-of-the-time's?

Yours etc.,
GRAHAM BIRD,
44 Ravensmead Way, W4,
April 7.

Tiger hunting

From Mr Ronald Balaam

Sir, You printed a photograph (March 28) of "hunters subduing a wild tiger near the Siberian city of Khabarovsk". How wretchedly little times change for tigers.

Picture Post for February 4, 1939, ran a four-page account of Khabarovsk's tiger-hunter G. Kalugin and his catch of Ussuri tigers. Your caption glowingly describes "hunters subduing a wild tiger bare-handed", but I put more credence in the 1939 account: "Harried by men and dogs, never allowed to pause for a second,

Aid for Albania

From Mr James Potts

Sir, In response to Sir John Stokes's letter (March 27) on aid for Albania, I write to inform you that, as of April 6, there will be an official British presence in Tirana, albeit a solitary one.

Barbara Hyde will be British Council English language teaching adviser based at the University of Tirana, where there will also be a British Council resource centre. A lorry of books and equipment for the centre leaves Britain for Tirana shortly.

This is only a beginning but we hope it will be a catalyst for more initiatives — and soon.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES POTTS (Head, East and Central Europe Department),
The British Council,
10 Spring Gardens, SW1.

Russians and business

From Mr Eric Pillinger

Sir, Bernard Levin's article ("What about the workers?", March 30), eloquently explains the difficulties of everyday life in Russia. While not disagreeing with his basic points I am happy to be able to give a brighter picture of Russian prospects.

I recently returned from running a five-day course at a Moscow business school for some 30 managers. They were younger than I expected (average age 35 years); they were cheerful, positive and humorous; they knew much more about management/marketing/financial principles than I had expected, although they were the first to admit that they needed some guidance in applying the principles; they were politely challenging but very open-minded; some of them had marvellous technology in their companies; they were highly motivated; they were also personally charming, friendly and hospitable.

In short, the standard of participation was as high as I have experienced with any similar group in any other country, and noticeably higher than some.

Yours faithfully,
E. PILLINGER
(Managing Director),
TACK Training International Ltd.,
TACK House,
Longmoore Street, SW1.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Large salaries

From Sir Bryan Roberts

Sir, Mr J. R. Anderson (letter, March 30) recommends institutional shareholders to restrain the immoderate salary increases which the chairman of British Gas is reported to be awarding himself. But why should we expect any chairman of an institution with substantial holdings in the gas industry to act so responsibly, when he is probably planning a similarly generous increase in his own salary, with the helpful example of British Gas, British Telecom and other privatised undertakings to justify it?

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN ROBERTS,
3 Caroline Place, W2.

Charity begins . . .

From Mrs D. F. Sweeting

Sir, It occurs to me that it would be useful if charities produced a donation form which includes the words "this is a one-off donation. I may or may not be moved to give to you again but I do not wish for expensive literature to be showered on me for the rest of my life".

Many are prepared to give once to some particular appeal, but most of us have a list of charities we support and are unable or unwilling to add to them.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH SWEETING,
Hill Farm, Little Rissington,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

April 4: The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon arrived at Heathrow Airport, London, from a visit to France. Lieutenant Commander Malcolm Sillars, RN, was in attendance.

The Duke of York today presented Colours to the 2nd/11th Battalion, the 7th/10th Battalion, and the 5th Battalion, Ulster Defence Regiment, at Redford Cavalry Barracks, Edinburgh.

His Royal Highness was received at Royal Air Force Turbomec by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the City of Edinburgh (Mrs Eleanor MacLachlan, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

Captain Alexander Baillie-Hamilton was in attendance.

The Prince Edward this morning opened the Partnership for Youth Day at the Metropolitan Police Cadet Corps School, Hendon, London NW9.

Mrs Richard Warburton was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE
April 4: The Prince of Wales today attended the Enthronement of the Right Reverend Peter Ball as Bishop of Gloucester in Gloucester Cathedral.

Lieutenant Commander Robert Fraser, RN, was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE
April 5: The Princess Margaret.

Counsellor of Snowdon, Patron, Tenous and Tenous-Scotland, was present this evening at the Tenous-Scotland Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Open Gala at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

Her Royal Highness was received on arrival by the Lord-Lieutenant for the City of Glasgow (Mrs Susan Baird, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

The Lady Glenconner was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE
April 4: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, London College of Music, was present this evening at a Concert at St Barnabas Church, Pittsinger Lane, and later attended a Reception at the Polytechnic of West London, Warwick Road, Ealing, London W5.

Mrs Euan McCorquodale was in attendance.

April 5: The Duchess of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Army Educational Corps, this morning attended a Service of Commemoration and Rededication in the Great Hall, Eltham Palace, London SE8.

In the afternoon Her Royal Highness attended a Beating of Retreat and met members of the Corps at the Royal Army Educational Centre, Becontree.

Mrs Euan McCorquodale was in attendance.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Jean Baptiste Rousseau, poet, Paris, 1671; Maximilian de Robespierre, French revolution leader, Arras, 1758; Alexander Herzen, writer and socialist, Moscow, 1812.

DEATHS: Raphael, painter, Rome, 1520; Albrecht Dürer, painter and engraver, Nuremberg, 1528; Sir Francis Walsingham, statesman, London, 1590; John Stow, antiquary, London, 1605; Giovanni Pascoli, poet, Bologna, 1912; Edwin Arlington Robinson, poet, New York, 1935; Jules Bordet, bacteriologist, Brussels, 1919; Stravinsky, composer, New York, 1971.

The revival of the Olympic Games at Athens, 1896. Robert Peary arrived at the North Pole, 1909. The United States declared war on Germany, 1917.

Central Council of Probation Committees

The following have been elected as national officers of the Central Council of Probation Committees: Chairman: Alan Pitt, JP (West Midlands) Vice-Chairman: Jean Wootton, OBE, JP, DL (Merseyside) Vice-Chairman: Ray Bradley, JP (North Yorkshire) Treasurer.

Christening

The infant son of Mr and Mrs Nigel Gibbons was christened Stephen Blaise by Canon Hendry at the Church of the Fillans, Crieff, on Sunday, April 5. The godparents are Miss Susan Parker, Mr Matthew Pissarro, Mr Charles Dunn and Canon Dominik Beisel von Gyninck.

Nature notes

THE first chickadees are back from the Mediterranean, but they are coming in more slowly than usual because of the cold winds. In passage, they sing in parks and gardens, but most of them settle down to breed in high woods with an undergrowth of brambles.

A few hoopoes have arrived from Africa: they are exotic pink birds, barred black and white above, with a crest they can open like a fan. In farmland, little owls are mating, and their noisy whistles ring out across the fields.

Slitting on a fence-post, they seem to know with their white eyebrows. Leaves and buds have also been slow to open further, but a green shimmer is creeping across the hawthorns, and the round elm buds in the hedges are turning into tiny leaf. One



of the smallest English flowers, whitlow grass, is out in stony places: it has four minuscule white petals, all cleft in two, and its brown stem is about an inch and a half tall. The bright pink, petal-like flowers of honesty can be found here and there on bare woodland floors: the species was brought here from southern Europe 500 years ago, and has often naturalised itself.

NOOPE

DJM



The Duke of Edinburgh, wearing the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet, inspecting veterans who returned to St Nazaire, France, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the daring commando raid

Michael Bourdeaux

Churches struggle in Ukraine

The churches in Ukraine are rejoicing in the new independence from Moscow. The emergence of this huge country - with 52 million people considerably larger than Poland both in area and population - will change the balance of European politics as well as of religion.

The history is complex. Kievan Rus of the Middle Ages accepted Orthodox Christianity in 988, but later fell to Tatar incursions from the East, which pushed the civilisation north to Moscow, where it became Russian. Ukrainian culture as such was driven west to Galicia and eventually came under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus in 1988 Ukrainians resented Moscow's presentation of the millennium of Christianity as primarily a Russian event, centred upon Moscow.

Only the eastern Ukraine was in the USSR in the 1930s, when Stalin tried to break its resistance through the purges and deliberate famine. Some remnants of Christian identity remained, despite the pressures of atheism and conformity. The second world war brought a dramatic change. The Germans allowed the re-opening of churches in areas they overran, so the Soviets later justified renewed persecution under the charge that the church had collaborated with the Nazis.

The victorious Red Army pushed the western frontier of the USSR far into Poland and Czechoslovakia, thus bringing the whole of Ukraine under one political system and incorporating millions of nationalists in Galicia, the heartland of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Church.

In 1946 Stalin abolished this Church at the Synod of Lviv, the legality of which was never accepted by Rome or the Ukrainian diaspora abroad. In a strange sequence of events, this assault would set in train the reversal of Soviet dominance over Ukraine 45 years later. Ukrainian national sentiment was driven underground and the Russian Orthodox took over the churches. For decades Soviet propaganda claimed the Greek-Cath-

olics had destroyed themselves, but finally on June 10, 1991 Patriarch Alei II of Moscow admitted in *Izvestia* that these events had occurred "under strong pressure from the Stalinist administration".

Christians were in the forefront of the re-emergence of free opinion in Ukraine in the 1960s. Nikita Khrushchev repudiated violent religious persecution in 1959, as a result of which there was a sustained campaign to close the great monastery, the Pochaev Lavra. On July 25, 1964, Yefrosinia Shchur wrote to U Thant, then Secretary-General of the United Nations, saying that her son was a monk at the monastery, but the authorities refused him residence rights and imprisoned him. "For communists," she commented, "white will always be black and vice-versa."

This initiative alerted world opinion and this kept the monastery open. It was such evidence which would eventually lead to Ukrainian independence. At the same time as the Pochaev events, the small Baptist community made Kiev the USSR-wide focus of an extraordinary campaign to break Soviet control over their life. Pastor Georgi Vins challenged the Soviet authorities to concede the freedom of worship guaranteed under the constitution, but this cost him prison sentences of three and then ten years. However, his followers alerted millions of people round the world to Soviet injustice. Public opinion was further enraged when Brezhnev expelled Vins to the USA as part of an exchange for Soviet spies held in America (five Christians are worth two spies," said Vins at the time).

The 1970s saw the re-emergence of Ukrainian nationalism, partly fuelled by the success Christians had had in resisting persecution in the previous decade. Most of the activists were themselves Christian. They quoted the new Helsinki Accords of 1975 in their defence, but this did not save them from heavy sentences in the courts. This nationalist movement dovetailed into the rebirth of the Greek-Catholic Church. Far from having been annihi-

lated by the events of 1946, it now had a covert following of perhaps five million, many attending worship in the churches that were now officially Russian Orthodox, some meeting in secret.

It was the lady who presented the public face of the campaign for re-legislation, men such as Vasyl Kobryn. He proclaimed his allegiance to the Ukrainian Catholic Church at a time when it did not officially exist, for which he suffered long imprisonment. In 1987 Ivan Hel, another layman, who had himself spent 17 years in the gulag, took over the leadership.

Behind Hel was a group of secretly ordained bishops who eventually celebrated the liturgy in the open air, often outside the churches they claimed back. The continued existence of an underground church was manifestly incompatible with perestroika and these vast crowds were the same people who would soon be spearheading the movement for Ukrainian independence (Rukh). In a remarkably short time they persuaded the more sophisticated population in the eastern Ukraine that continued allegiance to Moscow was neither politically nor economically beneficial for a vast republic which contained so many of its own resources.

On December 1, 1989 Mr Mikhail Gorbachev brought the gift of a legalised Greek-Catholic Church to the Pope in Rome. The Moscow Patriarchate has bitterly resented the re-emergence of the Ukrainian Catholics, claiming that they have been dispossessing the Orthodox, the rightful owners of the church buildings. Perhaps, now that Ukraine is independent, it may be possible for the two sides to resolve their differences in a less fraught atmosphere. However, a complicating factor is that the Orthodox Church itself is divided in Ukraine. The Moscow Patriarchate is under criticism from some Orthodox believers who want to break away from its dominating influence.

Canon Michael Bourdeaux is director of Keston Research, Oxford.

Forthcoming marriages

Captain A.D.F. Acheson, QRH and Miss D.E. Francis
The engagement is announced between Captain Andrew Acheson, The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Acheson, of Castleduff, Co Tyrone, and Diana, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Francis, of The Hall House, Bleaswood, near Ludlow, Shropshire.

Captain C.J. Barnes and Miss M.E. Mitchell
The engagement is announced between Justin, son of Brigadier and Mrs Charles Barnes, of Bridgnorth, and Fiona, daughter of Mr and Mrs Malcolm Mitchell, of Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

Mr J.A. Broadbent and Miss J.E. Prescott
The engagement is announced between Jeffrey, son of Mr Elva Broadbent, of Cronulla, Australia, and Jill, daughter of Mr and Mrs Leslie Prescott, of Luton, Bedfordshire.

Mr R.P.C. Clark and Miss C.L. Unett
The engagement is announced between Robert, son of Mr and Mrs S. D. Clark, of Curry Rivel, Somerset, and Charlotte, daughter of the late Captain T. Unett and of Mrs Unett, of Tarporley, Cheshire.

Dr C.J. Garmat and Dr K.E. Chandler
The engagement is announced between Clifford, son of Mr and Mrs John Garmat, of Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire, and Kate, daughter of Mr and Mrs Eric Chandler, of Chiswick, London, W4.

Mr S.D.C. Hillard and Miss N.F. French
The engagement is announced between Simon, only son of Mr and Mrs M.D. Hillard, of Newick, Sussex, and Nicky, daughter of Dr and Mrs R.L.D. French, of St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Mr A.J. Keech and Miss J.L. Petty
The engagement is announced between Andrew, elder son of Mr and Mrs Adrian Keech, of Yelland, North Devon, and Jillian, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs John Petty, of Darton, South Yorkshire.

Mr P.L. Letts and Miss L. Giordimaina
The engagement is announced between Philip, son of Mr and Mrs A.A. Letts, of Fairlight, Kingsdown, Hill, Surrey, and Laura, daughter of Mr and Mrs G. Giordimaina, of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, USA.

Mr P.J. Moore and Miss A.J. Runciman
The engagement is announced between Philip John, son of Mr and Mrs J. Moore, of Shifnal, Shropshire, and Alison Jane, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs H.L.I. Runciman, of Rhyl, Denbighshire.

Mr T.A.V. Perry and Miss D. de Belletroid
The engagement is announced between Timothy, son of Mr and Mrs T.A.V. Perry, of Clapton, London, and Mrs Eve Stace, of Midham Green, Berkshire, and Dominique, daughter of Mr and Mrs Yves de Belletroid, of Mol, Belgium.

Marriages

Mr C.C.I. Mitchell and Miss Charlotte Leeson-Steggs
The marriage took place on Saturday at St Germans Priory, near Tidesford, Cornwall, of Mr Charles Mitchell, eldest son of the late Mr James Mitchell and of Mrs Mitchell, and of the late Charlotte Leeson-Steggs, elder daughter of Viscount and Viscountess Boyd of Merton. The Rev Stephen Coffin officiated, assisted by the Rev Andrew Henderson.

The bride, who was given in marriage by her father, was attended by Charlotte Adam, Evelyn Amory, Olivia Amory, Catherine Beckitt, Alice Boyle, Rebecca Coryton, Daisy Dugmore, Patricia Lennox-Boyd, Joanna Lindfield, Fella Tass and Mary Wellesley. Mr Matthew Pilkington was best man.

A reception was held at the home of the bride's grandmother.

Dr N.M. Rose and Freuchen K. Hengst
The marriage took place on Saturday at Lemvig Church, Jutland, Denmark, of Dr Nicholas Martin Rose, younger son of Sir Clive and Lady Rose, of Lavenham, Suffolk, and Freuchen Karen Hengst, daughter of Dr and Mrs Jan Hengst, of Lemvig, Denmark. Pastor Erik Blich officiated.

The bride was given in marriage by her father and Mr Hugh Mackay was best man. A reception was held at the Hotel Norre Viad, Lemvig, and the honeymoon will be spent in Corsica.

Lieutenant Commander C.D.R. Morgan, RN and Miss C.H.L. Benson
The marriage took place on Saturday at St Peter's, Clapton, London, of Captain and Mrs R.C. Morgan, and Claire, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs David Benson. The Rev H.R. Duff officiated.

The bride, who was given away by her father, was attended by Miss Isabelle Benson and Lucinda Bilton. Commander Timothy Laurence, RN, was best man. A reception was held at the bride's home.

Telephone 071 481 4000

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Telefax 071 782 7827

BIRTHS

CASEMENT - On March 30th, to Rachel (nee Berry) and William, a daughter, Daisy.

Carver - On April 2nd 1992 at the City Hospital, Nottingham, to Deborah Jane Savage and Roger, a daughter, Rose Joy.

DE STACPOOLE - On April 1st 0600hrs 1992 to Jane (nee Bratton) and David, a daughter, Hugo Malachy Edward in the North Sea 55° 12' N - 40° 12' E, courtesy of Sealand, UK Sea Ways.

FENNER - On April 2nd 1992, to Marilyn (nee Lister) and Graham, a son, Pierre.

HOBBES - On March 16th, to Wendy (nee Corran) and Mark, a daughter, Charlotte Elizabeth Ann.

HUBBARD - On March 30th, to Penelope, wife of Theodore, a daughter, Kinvara.

MURBLE - On March 29th, to Nicola and Julian, a daughter, Eliza Mary, a sister for Sophie and Matthew.

INGRAM - On April 30th to Sarah (nee King) and David, a son, Leo, a brother for Sarah, Pippa and Anna.

MORRIS - On April 1st 1992, to Helen Taylor and David, a son, Leo, a brother for Sarah, Pippa and Anna.

NEEVES - On March 29th 1992, at the Royal Free, Hampstead, to Helen (nee Danson) and David, a son, Leo.

ROBINSON - On Tuesday March 31st at the Warfield, Northampton, to Claire (nee Williams) and David, a daughter, Lila.

DEATHS

On Saturday April 4th 1992, peacefully at Sunningdale Royal Hospital, Berkshire, Doctor Samuel Burt, formerly of Burt, Drury and Carlisle, a very much loved father, later in law and grand father, funeral service in Berkshire County, Church, Camerton on Wednesday 8th April at 1.30 pm, interment thereafter in Pantheon Church, York to which all friends are respectfully invited.

CARR-GREGG - On April 2nd, peacefully at home, at Shipston Road, Shipston on St Andrew's Church, Northamptonshire. Private cremation.

COOK - On April 3rd, peacefully at home after a long illness, Jean Margaret, beloved mother of Jonathan, Philip and Stephen, a very much loved mother, cremation private, no flowers by request, donations if desired to The Parkinson Disease Society, 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0RA.

FRENCH - On April 2nd 1992, suddenly at home, at 10, St. James's Place, London W1A 1BJ, after a long illness, dear and devoted husband of Dorothy, father of Andrew, Christopher and Jane, funeral service at St. Andrew's Church, 10, St. James's Place, London W1A 1BJ at 2.30 pm, Family flowers only, donations if desired to St. Andrew's Church, 10, St. James's Place, London W1A 1BJ, Tel: 071 229 3810.

GORDON - On April 4th 1992, 'Paul' dearly loved wife of Sir Sydney Gordon and mother of Fiona and Caroline, peacefully at home in Hong Kong.

NASWELL AMBROSE - On March 29th, at Parkside, North Devon, Elizabeth Anne, aged 86 years, funeral service at St. Columba's Church of Scotland, 100, St. Paul Street, London SW1, at 2.30 pm, Family flowers only, donations if desired to St. Columba's Church, 100, St. Paul Street, London SW1, Tel: 071 229 3810.

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LEGAL NOTICES

EDWARD KEMBLE LIMITED
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the above named company are required to send their names, addresses and particulars of their claims to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the company, at 25, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF, on or before 14th day of April 1992. This notice is given in pursuance of Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986.

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THE TIMES BUSINESS

MONDAY APRIL 6 1992

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL

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● RACING 25

MAN OF THE WEEK

Testing time for Tories on terrace

As part of the French political reshuffle that saw Pierre Bérégovoy replace Edith Cresson as prime minister, Bernard Tapie, the millionaire owner of the Marseille football club, became minister for urban affairs.

Mr Tapie's appointment may have been quietly noted by Ken Bates, the millionaire owner of Chelsea football club. For Mr Bates sits in the grandstands of power these days. David Mellor, the home office minister, is a regular visitor to Stamford Bridge, as is, when affairs of state allow, John Major, a lifelong Blues fan. A word in the right ear and who knows?

But all that could change on Thursday when Messrs Major and Mellor face the voters and Mr Bates and Chelsea have to produce £23 million or face eviction from Stamford Bridge at the end of the season. For Tory-voting Chelsea fans it will be an anxious 24 hours.

Mr Bates's deadline was set by the Court of Appeal. It chose the tenth anniversary of his buying the then debt-ridden club for £1 to give Chelsea seven days to



Bates: pugnacious

pay up or prepare to get out. It looked like a knockout win for Bates, the owner of Stamford Bridge through its takeover of Marler Estates, the property company that bought the ground in 1983 for £125 million.

Those that know say Mr Bates, aged 60 and with a career of trucking and offshore development behind him, will not be reaching for a chequebook on Thursday. But that does not mean to say he is giving up. Persistence is his middle name: it comes between controversial and pugnacious.

Even though John Duggan, the Cabra chairman, is away on holiday, there are reports that a compromise deal could yet be hammered out. Its path smoothed by the recent emergence of a Bates-backed company as Cabra's biggest shareholder. If he can secure Stamford Bridge, Mr Bates will win the gratitude of Chelsea's army of fans — with or without a prime minister.

MATTHEW BOND

CHANGE ON WEEK

THE POUND

US dollar 1.7420 (+0.0040)
German mark 2.8386 (-0.0195)
Exchange index 90.0 (-0.2)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 1851.4 (-63.5)
FT-SE 100 2382.7 (-65.2)
New York Dow Jones 3249.11 (+17.87)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 18559.71 (-1077.28)

Housing threat to Labour's growth hopes

BY ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE London housing market could be seriously hit by Labour's tax and national insurance plans. Previously unpublished official figures show that the market depends heavily on high earners taking out heavy mortgages, which could be most affected by tax increases. The degree to which this affects the economy of the region could be critical to the success of Labour's economic measures.

Independent forecasts released today suggest the economy would grow slightly faster in the first two years of a Labour government than under the Conservatives, unless confidence were undermined. One suggests that a hung parliament would produce a faster recovery than either a Labour or Conservative victory, even before taking account of Paddy Ashdown's pledge to veto Labour's top rate tax.

The forecasts, from the London Business School and the Independent Treasury Economic Modelling Group (Item), show Labour's spending plans adding between 0.1 and 0.3 of a percentage point to economic growth in 1992 and 1993. The Item group, which uses the Treasury's economic model, also carried out a separate analysis for a hung parliament. This suggested growth 0.3 of a percentage point higher under a Labour

Liberal Democrat coalition than under the Conservatives. Economists at both Item and LBS made it clear, however, that model-based economic forecasts could be undermined by any unexpected fall in confidence resulting either from financial market uncertainties about a Labour government or the impact of higher taxes on consumer confidence and house prices.

The dangers for the housing market in London and the South-East are underlined by the environment department's sample survey of new mortgages completed in the last quarter of last year. These normally unpublished figures reveal the London market's heavy dependence on large mortgages, expensive houses and upper income borrowers.

Loans for more than £60,000 accounted for 45.9 per cent of new mortgages in London, compared with a national average of 21.3 per cent, according to the survey. Almost 11 per cent of new mortgages in London were for more than £100,000 against a national average of 4 per cent. Almost 46 per cent of London borrowers had incomes of more than £25,000 compared with 21 per cent nationally, and 15 per cent of London borrowers had incomes in excess of £40,000.

Most City analysts predict that a Labour or coalition government would have to

pay an interest rate risk premium to persuade international investors to hold sterling at its present exchange rate.

The LBS and Item economic models suggest, however, that the consequent reduction in consumer spending, investment and private housing activity would be more than offset, at least in the first two years, by the higher public spending promised by Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

The LBS forecast pointed to growth of 1.2 per cent and 2.5 per cent in 1992 and 1993 under Conservative policies, against 1.5 per cent and 2.8 per cent under Labour. By 1995, however, growth would be slightly lower under Labour because of higher inflation, which would average 4.1 per cent over the next five years under Labour compared with 3.7 per cent under the Conservatives.

The Item forecast shows growth of 0.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent in 1992 and 1993 under Conservative policies, rising to 0.5 per cent and 1.9 per cent under Labour and 0.7 per cent and 2.0 per cent in a hung parliament.

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C&G society chief's pay breaks the £300,000 level

BY LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

A BUILDING society chief executive has broken the £300,000 earnings level for the first time. Andrew Longhurst, of the Cheltenham & Gloucester, the sixth-largest society, earned £306,041 last year, more than the chief executives of most high street banks.

The salary package includes a lump-sum performance-related bonus of more than £100,000, which has already been paid and taxed at the current 40 per cent top rate, thus avoiding the possibility of a 59 per cent tax bill under Labour. The C & G raised its profits 27 per cent in 1991 to £183.8 million. Mr Longhurst's salary rose from £265,000 — a 16 per cent increase.

Mr Longhurst celebrated his tenth anniversary as the chief executive of the society on April 1 and in October will have been with the C & G for 25 years. In his ten years at the top, profits have risen tenfold from £18 million.

His nearest building society rival is David O'Brien, who in his first complete year at the eighth-largest society earned £222,000, a basic salary of £185,000 and a bonus of 20 per cent for more than achieving the pay plan target. The society increased profits by 60 per cent to £100 million last year.

At the largest society, the Halifax, Jim Birrell, the chief executive, earned £197,867 and pre-tax profits increased

6 per cent last year. Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, received a £70,000 rise last year, from £191,806 to £261,906. Profits increased 6 per cent to £618 million.

The Alliance & Leicester would only give an earnings figure for 1990 when Scott Durward was chief executive of the third-largest society. He earned £203,814. The society's profits fell by 50 per cent last year and Peter White is now chief executive.

At Barclays, one director earned between £410,000 and £415,000 but it was not Sir John Quinlan, the chairman, or Andrew Buxton, the managing director. Sir John received a total of £356,357 last year when there was no profit-sharing — a reduction of almost £42,000 on 1990. The annual report says the

third best paid director last year received between £255,000 and £260,000.

Howard McDonald, the former chief executive and deputy chairman of NatWest Investment Bank, at £385,155, received more than Mr Longhurst or the NatWest chief executive last year. Part of this income was in lieu of notice after his resignation. Tom Frost, who resigned as chief executive of NatWest last week received between £250,000 and £295,000 last year.

Brian Pearce of the Midland is probably the highest-paid clearing bank chief executive before chairman level. His predecessor in 1990 received £295,703. The bank trebled its profits from £11 million to £36 million last year but would not reveal the chief executive's salary.

CATCHING UP WITH THE BANKS

ORGANISATION	CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SALARY	PROFIT RISE/FALL	PRE-TAX PROFIT £m
Building Societies			
Cheltenham & Gloucester	£306,041	Rise 27%	183.8
NatWest	£385,155	Rise 60%	100
Alliance & Leicester	£203,814	Fall 50%	99.5
Leeds	£200,186	Rise 11%	190.2
Halifax	£197,867	Rise 0%	628
Bradford & Bingley	£197,867	Rise 7%	108
Woolwich	£185,000	Fall 20%	136.4
Natwide	£183,000	Rise 21.8%	284.7
Bristol & West	£165,586	Rise 11%	57.4
Britannia	£132,000	Fall 13%	54
Banks			
Barclays	£410,000	Fall 30%	533
NatWest	£385,155	Fall 78%	110
Midland	£295,703	Rise 20%	36
Lloyds	£270,000	Rise 9%	645
Abbey National	£261,906	Rise 5%	618

Finding UK refuge from the Revenue

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU

WHOEVER wins the general election and whatever tax rates the new government wants to impose, one distinct group in British society will be watching Thursday night's events with unusual calm and equanimity. They are the employees of international institutions with bases or subsidiaries in Britain.

This lucky group pays virtually no normal income tax, whatever the tax rate. If John Smith's Budget came to pass, thousands of British middle managers, young City workers and administrators might find that the idea of working for an international organisation had suddenly become attractive.

Pay scales for international institutions vary, but an umbrella body sets the scales for many of them. You would be significantly better off in any of these institutions, however, than in a commercial enterprise or British public sector job, unless you are among Britain's

highest paid company directors. The European Bank, one of the more lucrative places to work in London, has average direct staff costs of £58,000.

The umbrella body sets the scales for organisations as distinct as the OECD, Nato, the Council of Europe, the Long Range Weather Forecasting Organisation, and the European Space Agency.

The lowest pay scale in the administrative category, A1, which applies, for example, to a junior graduate, is £19,500 to £20,100 after tax, depending more on age than performance. If these graduate trainees were employed in any British company or organisation, they would have to earn almost £30,000 (in case of a single person) to be as well off.

A mid-ranking single official on A4, say a space agency manager, would be on a net annual income of between £35,900 and £47,400. For a single person in normal employment to achieve the same net pay, gross annual earnings

would have to be between £55,000 and £75,000, again without taking into account allowances. Under Mr Smith, the person at the top of the range would need nearly £95,000 before tax.

The generosity of international institutions tapers off, however, when it reaches the top earners. On A7, director level, the range is £53,700 to £64,500, the equivalent of £85,000 to £100,000 before British tax for a single person. At the top of that range, the equivalent on Mr Smith's tax rates would be about £137,000.

The scales for the European Commission are in inverse order, with A1 the highest and A8 the lowest. A8 is £26,300 to £32,300, equivalent to up to £50,000 before tax in Britain under Mr Lamont, or perhaps £57,000 under Mr Smith. The top range for Brussels civil servants is £62,300 to £73,100, equivalent to between £100,000 and £120,000 before tax in Britain. And that is under Norman Lamont's tax rates.

Tesco sees safety in profit margins

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH

SIR Ian MacLaurin, Tesco's chairman, is expected to allay City fears that the group is heading for a slowdown this year when he unveils pre-tax profits estimated at about £540 million tomorrow, against £417 million in the year to February 1991.

But some doubts remain. David Reid, Tesco's finance director, acknowledged there were concerns about more competition, a slowdown in volume growth, trading down by consumers, worries of higher costs and fears about the length of the recession just at the time when his own and other supermarket groups are planning expansion.

"We have to accept that there is not a lot of sales volume increase around," he told a Goldman Sachs conference. "It is imperative, therefore, that we protect our net margins."

He said the other area Tesco is addressing with good results is productivity gains. "Productivity increased by 5 per cent in 1991," he said. Promotions such as the Multi-buy offer and own label price cuts have helped retain those customers who are attracted to the discounts.

Continued Sunday opening of 200 stores and Tesco's decision to accept the promotional coupons of all its competitors show just how intense the fight for the consumer has become. Mr Reid said that, unless productivity continued to rise to protect margins, the sector could suffer "sharply declining profits".

Mr Reid said Tesco had looked at the broader strategic issues if the recession is longer lived than expected. All the stores in the group's development programme have been reviewed. Sales forecasts have been updated and steps have been taken to force down land prices.

Tesco intends to open 1 million sq ft of new selling space in each of the next two years and 800,000 sq ft of new space per annum thereafter. The cost of the programme will remain at £700 million to £800 million per annum, which Mr Reid says is justified by the high level of contributions from conforming stores.

Mr Reid says he believes discounters such as Aldi form a viable part of the market but that the two can co-exist happily. "The difficult trading conditions of last year were due to the recession, not to competitive discounting or saturation," he said.

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No house of cards: Sir Ian MacLaurin aims to reassure City sceptics

Escudo rate to ease strain on pound

BY GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

PORTUGAL'S escudo will start trading in the European exchange-rate mechanism this morning after intensive weekend talks designed to fix the currency at rates less likely to disrupt the system and cause problems for sterling, which is anchored at the bottom of the ERM league.

The European Community's monetary committee agreed to fix the escudo at a central rate of 178.135 to the ecu and at rates of £3.889 and DM11.502 per 1,000 escudos. Like sterling, it will start with a 6 per cent possible variation from central rates, and leaves the Greek drachma as the only EC currency outside the ERM.

In market trading, the escudo had stood at 176 to the ecu, but the Portuguese government had asked for it to join at 180, representing a devaluation of 2.2 per cent. At the agreed rate, it will have been devalued 1.6 per cent.

The suggested 180 rate was rejected because it was likely to exaggerate the rise in the escudo within the system that is expected to take place because of the ensuing boost to confidence. ERM entry will raise hopes that Portugal will be able to reduce its inflation rate, one of the highest in the Community. The Portuguese government has estimated the inflation rate at about 8 per cent, but the EC statistical office put the annual rate at 12.5 per cent in February.

The compromise central rate is the notional rate against the ecu fixed in October 1990, when sterling entered the ERM. Since this rate did not require any changes in other central rates, the monetary committee concluded it was least likely to cause disruption.

Since joining the ERM, sterling has traded well within its nominal limits against the mark but has come under pressure against the Spanish

peseta. The relative weakness of sterling has been exacerbated by uncertainty over the election, but there has been no run on the currency because dealers understood that no rise in interest rates, still less devaluation, could come before the election.

Nigel Wicks, the senior Treasury official at the Brussels price fixing, said: "We were very happy with the outcome."

However, dealers will watch closely this morning in case the escudo replaces the peseta at the top of the ERM league. Sterling is trading at its ERM floor, equivalent to about DM2.84 at current cross-rates. Euphoria over the escudo, which could be harder to control in the short-term than the peseta, would force the Bank of England to support sterling.

Inflation to fall below 4%

FIGURES due on the morning after the election should show that the annual rate of inflation fell below 4 per cent in March.

City forecasts centre on a rise in the retail price index of 3.8 per cent, down from 4.1 per cent, at which it stayed in February. On government forecasts, inflation would still be at around 3.8 per cent by the end of the year.

Next week's producer prices data for March are forecast to show the annual increase in factory gate prices, a gauge of inflation that is closely watched by the Treasury and the Bank of England, dropping to 4.1 per cent from 4.4 per cent.

Excluding the distorting effect of mortgage interest payments, annual retail price inflation is expected to slow only slightly, from 5.6 per cent in February to 5.5 per cent in March.

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UN blames ignorance for slump in east Europe

By Wolfgang Münchau
EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

A UNITED Nations report has blamed the ignorance of western advisers as well as dogmatic politicians for a slump in east European countries "which appears to be on the scale of the depression of the 1930s".

In its annual *Economic Survey of Europe*, the UN's Economic Commission for Europe said western economists not only failed to comprehend the social and political dynamism that led to the overthrow of the communist regimes, but continued to show ignorance in the subsequent period.

The report said: "The revolutions were quickly followed by western advisers explaining why there was 'no alternative' to doing this or that if the transition to a market economy were to be successful, and by politicians declaring that the transition would be swift and painless."

The conclusion amounted to a thinly veiled attack on the radical reform policies of, among others, Václav Klaus, the Czechoslovak finance minister, one of the most radical free-market politicians in eastern Europe, and of Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the shock-therapy guru and previously an adviser to the Polish and Russian governments.

The report claimed that the population in eastern Europe received the wrong signals from over-optimistic politicians, which resulted in the creation of false expectations. The slump in eastern German output, which led to an unexpected escalation in the budgetary costs, was cited as a prime example of this misplaced optimism.

The potential implication of this failure could be serious. "Once filled with hope,

the countries in transition have increasingly become an area of disillusion, anxiety and socio-political tensions."

The report claimed: "Many of the people in these countries must now be wondering whether the invisible hand of the market is really an iron fist."

Figures show that industrial output was sharply down all over eastern Europe last year: 27 per cent in Bulgaria, 23 per cent in Czechoslovakia, 14-16 per cent in Hungary and 12 per cent in Poland. The Yugoslavian economy virtually collapsed with gross domestic product down 28 per cent and inflation up 184 per cent. The highest annual inflation rate was recorded in Bulgaria, 474 per cent, while Hungary all had double-digit inflation rates.

The report did not make any specific forecasts for this year, but said that "economic prospects for east European countries for 1992 remain bleak and uncertain". Poland and Hungary might see a modest upturn in the second half, but there remained the danger that "reform fatigue" could delay the recovery.

The commission's criticism is especially fierce on privatisation. "The speed of privatisation which might satisfy democratic and political objectives could be too fast for avoiding deleterious economic outcomes." Privatisation should only proceed after the monopolies of the former central planned economies are broken up.

Market access to western Europe and the establishment of stabilisation funds are cited as vital ingredients for the reform process to succeed.



All this and stamps too: John Roberts outside the Ryman Post Office franchise in High Holborn, London

Post Office betting on lottery trade

COUNTERS, the high street outlets arm of the Post Office, could add substantially to its profits by taking a leading role in operating the proposed national lottery (Derek Harris writes).

It is estimated the lottery cash flow would be £3 billion a year with administration accounting for about a third.

John Roberts, managing director of Post Office Counters, is to make a strong bid for the lottery business. He

sees it as the icing on what he plans as a much bigger Post Office retailing cake. As part of a £54 million refurbishment of the UK's 1,100 main post offices, a network of "postshops" is being created. These are shops within shops, selling stationery and greeting cards.

An increasing number of key retailers including supermarkets and high street chains are also operating post offices on their premises in franchising deals. There are now 27 such franchised post offices around the country and Mr Roberts expects to have 50 within a year.

Ryman, the stationery chain arm of Pentos, has three post offices operating

experimentally, two of them in central London and the other at Southampton. Argill's Safeway has seven and nine retail Co-ops are also involved with Sainsbury also trying one out at a Savacentre, Littlewoods, Thomas Cook and Budgens also have trials.

Mr Roberts believes the new, bigger stores will make the best fit for post offices. Already the high street post office network is Europe's largest retailing business, serving 25 million customers a week through the big main post offices and 19,000 smaller ones. The network's size makes it a natural choice as a lottery operator, he adds.

BAe boosted by more Saudi contracts

By Gillian Bowditch

SAUDI Arabia's decision to go ahead with a £1.5 billion extension to its wide-ranging Al Yamamah defence contract is expected to benefit most of Britain's big defence companies and will come as a great relief to British Aerospace, the main contractor.

The £20 billion ten-year contract is funded by 500,000 barrels of

Saudi Arabian oil a day and there is speculation the Saudi Arabian Government may soon increase its daily funding of the contract.

British Aerospace, the British company expected to benefit most from the extra cash injection, said yesterday that it was delighted to hear about the additional funding. "This is a big step forward," said a spokeswoman. The group is now awaiting a decision as to

what the Saudi Arabia's additional requirements will be.

The spokeswoman said there was no timescale for the decision. "We do not put our customers under a time pressure," she said. But analysts expect a Saudi order for 48 Tornado IDS fighter bombers to be top of the list. Other priorities are believed to be 60 Hawk trainer fighters, construction of airbases and minesweepers. BAe shares

have suffered recently on fears that Al Yamamah orders would be delayed and this weekend's news is expected to give them a boost. On Friday they closed down 1p at 299p.

The group's shares have languished since the £430 million rights issue last year which was largely left with the underwriters. At that time Sir Graham Day took over as acting chairman and Professor Sir Roland Smith resigned.

De Beers buys own stolen gems

By Colin Campbell, Mining Correspondent

THEFTS of rough diamonds from Angola's diamond fields, and illicit dealing in such goods in Antwerp, have reached epidemic levels, according to diamond dealers.

Traders say that stones with a market value of \$6 million find their way to Antwerp every week, and that many of the rough diamonds are of substantial size.

In a three-week period recently, De Beers, whose Central Selling Organisation handles 80 per cent of the world's rough sales, had to buy in \$4.5 million of its own stones. Several international agencies have formally told the Angolan authorities of the damage to the country's international financial standing, including the attitude of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and leading mining companies, if smuggling is not halted.

De Beers confirmed that during a three-week period earlier this year it was offered various parcels of diamonds whose sizes, at over two carats each, were well above average run-of-mine size. The group spent \$4.5 million in "buying in" stones that were recognised as having come from its own concession area.

In December 1990, De Beers initiated a deal with Angola and Endiama, the Angolan state diamond marketing arm, that involved a \$50 million advance to help to develop the Cuango diamond fields, and embraced an intention to spend a further \$50 million on an exploration programme.

In return, De Beers would be granted agreement to sell Angolan production through its CSO network. But the illicit trading could call into question any further Angolan investment by De Beers.

Traders say the fluid political climate ahead of Angolan elections in September and the proclamation of a law allowing citizens to market and possess diamonds and precious metals "as long as they have been acquired under mining areas granted to companies" have caused problems. The standing down of the army in some

areas has aggravated the situation, and trading diamonds for arms is not unknown.

That Angola's full rough diamond output is not passing through official channels is proved by Endiama's figures. In 1989, production was 1.13 million carats worth \$232 million. In 1990, production fell to only 960,000 carats worth \$178 million. Production so far this year has been a trickle.

Muddy Fox bicycle group sold

Touche Ross, the administrator of Muddy Fox, the mountain bike company, has sold the business to Sitac, a UK-based engineering and property company, and 71 Cycles of India for an undisclosed sum, thought to be about £1 million.

The new owners plan to develop the Muddy Fox business and are looking to appoint distributors in the UK and Germany. Plans are also afoot to expand the business in Europe, North America and Australasia.

Muddy Fox sold about 50,000 bikes in Europe last year at prices between £98 and £1,500. It had a total turnover of £8.5 million.

Salary cut

Bernard Matthews, chairman of the turkey group, takes a £1,032 a year pay cut after poorer 1991 profits, the annual report shows. His annual pay, which is on a profits-related basis, fell from £360,273 in 1990 to £306,584 after a drop from £15.3 million to £13.1 million in pre-tax profits.

Inflation hope

Horst Kohler, the German finance ministry state secretary, said the country's inflation rate would fall well below 4 per cent this year. The cost of living in west Germany rose a provisional 4.7 per cent year-on-year in March.

Buyers beware the chicken factor

EACH day the chicken awakes to see the sun shining. A hand would reach over the fence to place a plate of corn on the ground for the chicken to eat. It was a comfortable life, and the chicken had no reason to think it would not continue forever. Unfortunately, this conclusion was wrong. One day the hand reached over and wrung its neck.

Sterling has certainly been remarkably stable in the run-up to the election, but investors who conclude from this that sterling is safe might end up like the chicken, just because something has not yet happened does not mean it never will.

The authorities here and in the rest of the European exchange-rate mechanism were not going to allow a sterling crisis before the general election. But afterwards attitudes will change. For example, the Spanish are not likely to be happy if sterling weakness continues to pull down the peseta. I suspect the Conservatives will be ousted on Thursday and this will result in renewed downward pressure on the pound.

The real problem for John Smith, the shadow chancellor, if he arrives at Number 11, is not that the pound will

drop outside its ERM band — the Bank of England has \$44 billion of reserves to support sterling — but that he would need to build credibility rapidly if he is to fund Labour's spending plans.

There have been no gilt issues since the Budget and the authorities slightly underfunded in 1991-2. There is a real risk that any new gilt issue would meet a "buyers' strike" while there remain doubts about sterling's position within the ERM. Moreover, in 1993, the PSBR under a Labour government is likely to rise to at least £40 billion. That will mean net gilt issuance will exceed British institutions' cash flow. Thus, Labour would depend on foreign investors if public spending is not to crowd out private investment completely. To convince foreigners to buy gilts, Mr Smith needs to build ERM credibility.

But how does one build credibility? Certainly Mr Smith will be reluctant to push up base rates. Indeed, he would prefer to cut them if Labour is a minority government or has only a small majority. But this will be obvious to the markets. Thus, his stated commitment to the ERM will

not carry any weight because the markets will not believe it will be backed by action. More bullish commentators argue that investors will believe Mr Smith because of the example set by the French socialist government. But they have always been willing to raise interest rates to defend the franc.

Adding to Mr Smith's difficulties, the near-term outlook for the economy is dire. Even if Labour succeeded in avoiding a base rate increase, I doubt they would be able to flatten the money market yield curve. Three-month money rates are about 11 per cent, well above base rates, and there is a strong possibility that mortgage rates will have to rise.

In addition, while Labour's tax plans are theoretically fiscally neutral, the element of income redistribution (worth about £5 billion) is a dangerous measure in the middle of the recession. Uncertainty, the likelihood of a mortgage rate rise, more weakness in the housing market and the impact of big cuts in the disposable income of high-earners — which will filter down to other parts of the economy — all seem set to delay the recovery at the very least. Even if

the pound survives the first few weeks of a new government, the risk is that as the months pass and it becomes clear the economy is still stagnant, there will be renewed calls for devaluation.

Speculation about devaluation will be heightened by two other factors. First, elements of the Tory party would blame its defeat on the ERM. The argument would be that, had Norman Lamont not been constrained as Chancellor by the ERM, he could have implemented the base rate cuts necessary to ensure victory. Calls for a reassessment of Britain's links with Europe will be coming from all corners of the House. Second, I envisage another hike in German rates this year.

The gilt market would normally welcome further economic weakness and continued high interest rates. However, the problem is that the threat of devaluation will remain in investors' minds. It would take Mr Smith at least six months to build credibility and during this time gilt investors will demand a substantial yield premium.

GLENN DAVIES
Credit Lyonnais

Next hopes to set a trend with a fashionable line in figures

LORD Wolfson of Sunningdale, the chairman of Next, is expected to report a continued recovery tomorrow as the fashion retailing group bucks the gloomy trend.

Next, where David Jones is the chief executive, will benefit from much improved margins, aided by good stock controls, and healthy second-half like-for-like sales growth. Julie Ramshaw, at Morgan Stanley, has pencilled in final pre-tax profits of "at least" £10 million against last year's loss of £7.2 million. Market forecasts range from £7 million to £10 million. Earnings per share of 2.7p and a dividend of 0.8p (0.7p) are forecast.

Morgan Stanley is looking for profits at Next Directory of £4 million (£2.6 million), while Next retailing is expected to make at least £5.1 million, against a loss of £2.3 million. Net interest charges will fall dramatically, with the possibility of a positive contribution, reflecting the proceeds from the £165 million sale of the Grauman mail order business. Last time's interest charge was £14.4 million.



In good shape: David Jones, of Next, which is expected to recover strongly

TODAY

The tough trading conditions affecting the domestic market are expected to restrict the profits growth at Highland Distilleries, the whisky group best known for its Famous Grouse brand. Recession and declining consumption are likely to hold first-half pre-tax profits growth to about 5 per cent at £15.8 million (£15.1 million), according to County NatWest. A dividend of 1.52p (1.38p) is predicted.

Interim: Highland Distilleries. Final: Chepstow Racecourse, Cooper Clarke Group, Dewhurst Group, Fortnum & Mason, Folor, Severfield-Raeve, T & S Stores. Economic statistics: Credit business (February).

TOMORROW

Meggitt, the specialist engineering group, is expected to report final pre-tax profits in the region of £25 million, against £23.9 million last time, according to UBS Phillips & Drew.

Tesco, the supermarket group, should unveil an advance in its final pre-tax profits to £545 million (£417 million), after allowing for £90 million (£63 million) of

capitalised interest, says Nick Bubb at Morgan Stanley. Market forecasts range from £525 million to £540 million. A dividend of 6.2p (5.3p) is predicted.

Interim: Black & Edgington Group, Magnetic Materials Group, Ossory Estates, Pegasus Group, St Ives, Wardle Stores, Wesco Group. Final: Balfour Gifford Technology, BLP Group, Boosey & Hawkes, British Dredging, City Centre Restaurants, Debenhams Group, F&B Holdings, Ipeco Holdings, Meggitt, Next, Pimlico, Q&S Holdings, Sherwood Group, Tesco, United Friendly Group, Waterford Wedgwood. Economic statistics: Cyclical indicators for the UK economy (February — first estimate).

WEDNESDAY

Kleinwort Benson expects Queens Moat Houses to report relatively flat final pre-tax profits of £92 million, against £94.1 million last time, as the hotels group is insulated by its strong continental interests. Market forecasts range from £88 million to £93 million. Earnings per share of 7.5p (8.5p) are predicted, although the dividend should rise to 2.9p (2.6p).

Costain, the construction

and mining group, will remind the market just how tough the last year has been. Nikko, the Japanese securities house, expects the group to give to a final pre-tax loss of £25 million, against a profit of £5.5 million last time.

Market forecasts range from losses of £20 million to £35 million. A reduced dividend of 5.75p (12.25p) is forecast.

UBS Phillips & Drew expects Oceans Group, the freight, environmental and marine services group, to report an advance in final pre-tax profits to £51 million, against £48 million last time. Market forecasts range from £50 million to £55 million.

Despite the effects of the recession in Britain and America, with the freight forwarding and environmental services sectors being particularly difficult, the increase in profits will largely reflect interest savings after last year's £88 million rights issue. Marine services should have held up well, with both offshore supply and towage performing well.

Interim: Cooper (Frederick), Jersey Electricity Company. Final: Blockades, Booycott International, Brammer, Cairn Energy, Clayform Properties, Costain Group, CSC Investment Trust, EFG, Magnolia Group, Malaysia Group, Ocean Group, Profruct (Alexander), Queens Moat Houses, Richards Group, Syko, Sykes-Parkhurst Group, Total.

THURSDAY

Most analysts are predicting that profits, before provisions, at Amec, the construction and engineering group, will come in somewhere between £40 million and £50 million for the full year, against £63.4 million last time. However, this could be reduced to break-even after the provisions.

Interim: Beckman (A), Dowling & Mills. Final: Amec, Anglo American Gold Investment Co, Anglo American Investment Trust, Britannia Group, Foreign & Colonial Pacific Investment Trust, Paramore, Rethorne Brothers, Sindell (William), Whatman.

FRIDAY

Interim: Star Computer Group. Final: Bliton (Percy), Eys (Wimbledon), Ustler Television. Economic statistics: Usable steel production (March); details of employment, unemployment, earnings, prices and other indicators; retail prices index and tax and price index (March); quarterly analysis of bank advances (December-February).

PHILIP PANGALOS

SMALLER COMPANIES

Wightman works a DIY miracle at Welpac

THE housing market might be moribund and retail demand sluggish but Welpac, a supplier of do-it-yourself products, is managing to buck the trend.

Despite its depressed sector and the potentially damaging impact of a rights issue and a placing in less than one year, Welpac's shares have more than doubled, from 10p in June 1991 to 23p. Don

Wightman was appointed chief executive in February last year, and his efforts to refocus the business and strengthen the balance sheet have earned institutional support.

His arrival was followed by a £2.4 million rights issue in June and an agreement with Stanley Works, of America, for the exclusive supply of Stanley hardware products in

Britain. Last month, Mr Wightman returned to the City to raise £3.45 million via a placing and open offer to fund two acquisitions and establish a joint venture supplying Stanley products in Germany. More than 25 million shares were the subject of the offer, on about a one-for-2.2 basis at 19p a share, and the issue was over-subscribed.

Welpac paid an initial £925,000 for Anderson & Firmin, a supplier of gardening hardware products, and a 40 per cent interest in Kibro Elbert Glove, a manufacturer of gardening gloves. The second acquisition is of TJ Harwood, a supplier of door furniture and other hardware, for an initial consideration of £750,000.

In Germany, a joint venture agreement was signed with Brauckmann & Probsting, a hardware supplier. Welpac is expected to report a small loss for the year to



Wightman: refocused

January 31, but should earn profits of about £1.2 million in the current year as the benefits of acquisitions and restructuring come through, even if consumer demand remains weak.

MARTIN BARROW

THE TIMES

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Beers buys stolen gems

BY ILLUMINATING CORRESPONDENT

Highly skilled and experienced in the art of theft, the thieves who have stolen the gems of the British royal family are now being hunted by the police. The gems, which are worth millions of pounds, were stolen from the royal collection in 1990. The thieves are believed to be working for a group of international criminals who are active in the diamond trade. The police are currently conducting a nationwide search for the gems, which are believed to be hidden in various locations across the country.

Muddy For bicycle group sold

A group of cyclists who were involved in a major accident on a muddy road have been sold to a new group. The group, which was formed in 1990, was involved in a major accident on a muddy road in 1991. The accident resulted in the death of one cyclist and the injury of several others. The group was subsequently sold to a new group, which is now responsible for the group's activities.

Salary cut

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Inflation hop

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trend with in figures

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Dangers lurk in the soft option

When Sir David Walker, chairman of the Securities and Investments Board, first looked at soft commission arrangements for stock exchange trading by fund managers, it appeared an obscure issue of minor importance. By the start of this year, up to a sixth of deals were covered by soft commission arrangements and the SIB seemed to be staring at a logical choice between banning the practice or undoing one of the basic 1986 Big Bang reforms — the bringing together of brokers and market-makers — to prevent abuse. Even self-regulation could now be at stake.

On Friday, Sir David, who is clearing his desk before his departure to Lloyds Bank and who has become thoroughly fed up with the whole matter, announced that he had put the lid back on this dangerous box. Having made a core rule to cover "softing" a year ago and conducted a confusing consultation exercise this year, the SIB announced that, unless there are significant new developments, it "does not envisage a further review of the rule".

You can see Sir David's point. Undoing the reforms would threaten London's competitiveness. Banning the practice would hit the very people complaining loudest about abuses. Soft commissions started in America as a marketing tool for stockbrokers after a price war. Having driven down their costs on a basic dealing service, a new breed of brokers offered services such as information systems or independent research reports, free of charge in exchange for a guaranteed flow of orders.

This seemed sensible but raised a potential conflict of interest. The fund managers get free services but investors in the funds pay the commission, so the professionals might be tempted to deal too much. After the system crossed the Atlantic, potential conflicts became much greater when integrated securities houses undercut the soft commission brokers with their own softing deals. The securities houses had an obligation to deal at the best available price, but this only meant the best price published on the exchange's electronic screens. Many deals are negotiated at finer prices. The investor therefore might have to pay wider spreads to pay for the benefits to fund managers.

Sir David believes that if London is to maintain its primacy as a clean but dynamic financial centre, innovations brought by market forces should be regulated rather than banned. The SIB ruled out services such as disguised free holidays and said integrated houses could offer softing deals only if they charge commission. This rule has only recently found its way fully through the regulatory system, so its workings are unproved. The practice has, however, mushroomed since the SIB restricted it.

The SIB's attempt to end the softing debate might have succeeded had not Peter Rawlins, chief executive of the London Stock Exchange, issued a public call to fund managers to end the practice. "To the average man, if people want a service they should be prepared to pay visibly for it," Mr Rawlins told the annual conference of pension fund managers. Sir David was not pleased, particularly over the context in which Mr Rawlins chose to condemn soft commissions. It was, he had said, an example of a practice that failed the smell test and the greatest threat to self-regulation would be "a perception that the practitioner-regulators are tied up in their own vested interests".

Mr Rawlins said the investment community should end softing of its own accord. Under self-regulation, that must mean through its own rules. To suggest, as the SIB has done, that pension fund trustees should vet a practice that the SIB has failed to come to terms with after many years of effort is absurd. Fans of statutory control could hardly be offered more potent ammunition.

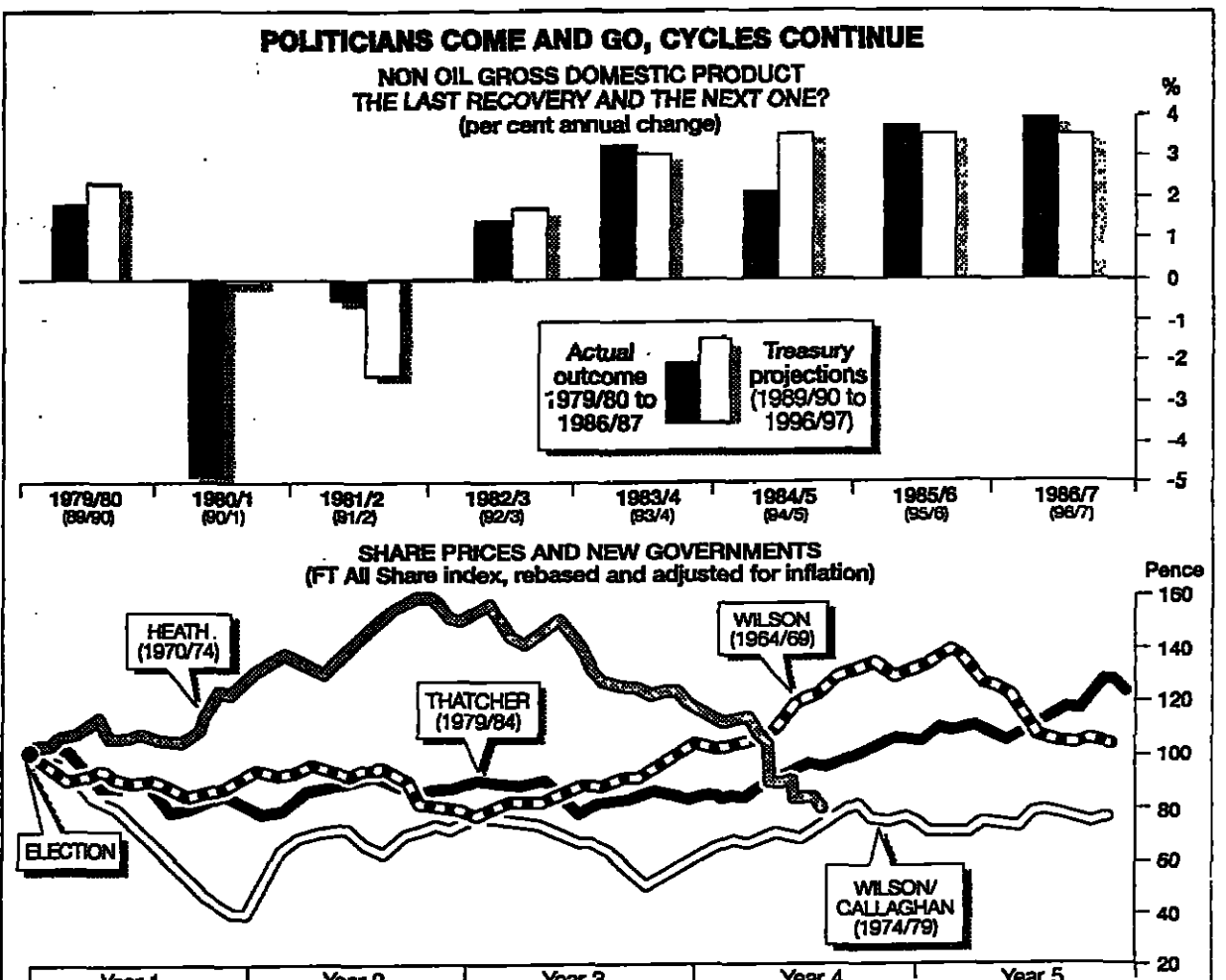
A Liberal-Labour coalition could still meet both parties' goals for economic growth, writes Anatole Kaletsky

One word has changed the outlook for the British economy and the financial markets after the general election. Last week, *The Times* asked Paddy Ashdown a straight question: "Will you give an unequivocal commitment that you will vote against a Finance Bill or Budget Resolution that contains the National Insurance and top tax rates proposed in John Smith's Shadow Budget?" Mr Ashdown gave a straight answer: "Yes". That single word could transform Britain's economic and financial prospects after April 9.

In principle, the next government should face a reasonably favourable economic prospect. The recovery projected by the Treasury is long overdue and would be entirely consistent with historical experience, as the top chart shows. As the lower chart suggests, stock market returns in the long term have not been very different under Labour and Tory governments and business might not have much to fear from the election in the long term.

Yet because of John Smith's budget proposals, Labour could face even more pressure and hostility from the markets and business community than in 1974 and 1964. This would not be just a matter of prejudice or pique. Although Mr Smith certainly wants to hit businessmen and City dealers where it hurts with his punitive taxes, there are also objective reasons for financial anxiety about his budget.

The Smith budget would not only redistribute income between social classes. It would shake up the structure of regional and industrial employment and demand. Econometric models suggest that, on balance, the redistribution proposed by Mr Smith could raise Britain's employment and output, but what they do not reveal is whether the mechanical demand effects of taking money from the rich, relatively high savers, and giving it to the government and pensioners, relatively high spenders, would be overwhelmed by less tangible depressing factors. These would include the possible drop in confidence among indebted homeowners and the inevitable supply side disruptions when unemployed waiters in London or redundant Jaguar



workers in Coventry have to find jobs as hospital porters in Manchester or Nissan workers in the North-East.

Labour's economists may put their faith in the models, but they ignore financial sentiment at their peril, especially if their party fails to win an outright majority. If the City and business community feel Labour's tax policies are damaging Britain's growth prospects, their prophecies could become self-fulfilling. Alarm would spread about the party's ability to stay in the ERM and simultaneously arrange the early economic recovery needed for re-election. To defend sterling, Labour might raise interest rates, but that would only give another twist to the vicious circle of low growth, political pressures for reflation, dwindling financial confidence and still higher interest rates.

But consider a Labour government in a hung parliament. First, and less likely, suppose Mr Ashdown receives the long-awaited phone call from Neil Kinnock to negotiate a Lib-Lab coalition. After Mr Ashdown's clear undertaking on Saturday, it would be all but impossible for the Lib Dems to accept Labour's tax plans, even in exchange for promises about PR. To do so would be to betray the very middle-class voters the party needs permanently to win from the Tories.

Suppose secondly, and

more probably, that Labour refused to deal on PR and instead tried to run a minority government. With the Liberals committed to voting down Mr Smith's budget, a minority Labour government would face defeat on its Finance Bill — an issue of confidence that would lead to the government's resignation.

The alternative for a minority government would be to do as Labour did several times in the Seventies: talk to the third party and offer a budget package Mr Ashdown could at least abstain on and possibly support. In the process, Labour could wriggle out of their most foolish and economically risky tax plans.

To devise a sensible package combining Liberal and Labour manifesto commitments would be surprisingly easy. Such a package could raise enough money to pay for Mr Smith's spending pledges, yet spread the costs

far less painfully than his original tax plan. The key elements of such a package might be: Labour would implement all Mr Smith's shadow budget plans except for the extension of National Insurance contributions, creating a top tax band of 50 per cent instead of 59 per cent. This would leave the government short of £2.7 billion in a full year. To meet Mr Smith's justified claim that marginal tax rates should not be allowed to fall suddenly above the £21,060 National Insurance limit, the government would introduce a new 35 per cent intermediate tax band, stretching from taxable incomes of £17,500 (equivalent to £21,060 of gross income) to £23,700, where the present 40 per cent tax band begins. Extrapolating from the Treasury ready-reckoner published in the last autumn statement, this new tax band would raise at least £1.5 billion in a full year.

How would the govern-

ment find the remaining revenues of £1.2 billion? This could be the sole controversial issue for Liberal-Labour negotiations on tax. The best way to proceed would simply be to accept a slightly higher PSBR, in line with Liberal policies, at least until the economy showed clear signs of recovery. This slippage would surely be welcomed in the City if it were the price for much less punitive taxes. An obvious alternative would be to raise £2.2 billion by adding a penny to standard rate tax, as the Liberals have suggested, but spending only half of this on education.

But suppose that Labour insisted on recreating a 60 per cent tax band? The Liberals could insist on doing this in a much less punitive and economically risky way than Mr Smith has proposed. A new 60 per cent tax band could be introduced on taxable income of £57,000, equivalent to gross earnings of roughly £60,000, about the

same level in real terms as under Denis Healey in 1978-9. It would affect only a small fraction of the people hit by Mr Smith's present plan for a combined tax and National Insurance rate of 59 per cent on incomes as low as £40,000. Yet, according to Inland Revenue calculations, such a band would raise revenue of £1.2 billion.

Labour would still get its 60 per cent top marginal tax rate and have the satisfaction of punishing the biggest beneficiaries of Thatcherism. The Lib Dems could justifiably claim to have defended the middle classes against expropriative taxes. They might also extract a pledge from Labour to raise the 50 and 60 per cent in the long term, and introduce a lower rate for long-term capital gains, as the remaining anomalies and allowances in the tax system were removed.

As under Mr Smith's original proposals, people earning less than £21,060 would be unaffected. But the potential losses for professionals and managers higher up the income scale would be spectacularly reduced. The maximum annual loss for anyone earning up to £40,000 would be £620, instead of £1,700 under Labour's plan. At £60,000, the compromise plan would cost £3,700, instead of £5,500. In fact, everyone earning up to £150,000 a year would be better off under the Lib-Lab plan.

How could the Lib-Lab tax plan raise the same revenue as Mr Smith's proposal, yet leave so many fewer losers? The answer lies in the Liberals' most important contribution to the tax debate — their insistence that tax and National Insurance be integrated into a single, equitable system. By failing to apply its National Insurance surcharge to investment and self-employed incomes, Labour is forgoing large amounts of revenue from the genuinely rich and creating a tax system more onerous for the middle class than those that existed under Mr Healey and Nigel Lawson — and threatening economic recovery. Mr Ashdown would offer a Labour government the perfect excuse to get itself off this hook — and safeguard its economic hopes into the bargain.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Dark horse at Lloyds

ONE of Lloyds Bank's most closely guarded secrets is out. The famed black horse of its lavish advertising series is not black at all, but a dark bay. The horse, Kustos, has been traced by the *City Diary* to stables near Lymington in the New Forest, where it is kept safely away from prying eyes. Emerging from its haven for a breath of air, the frisky beast seemed ready to gallop off across the open fields in the style of the television commercial, which shows off its flowing black locks to the tune of *Steppers Awake* by Bach. Asked what magic transforms it into the sleek, jet-black creature of the advertisements, the handlers were most forthcoming. After a good grooming to bring out the shine, the hapless nag is dosed with liberal quantities of cod-liver oil. Lloyds, meanwhile, insists that there are in fact several "black" horses dotted around the country with names like Cancara, Beatos and so on. As if we would believe such a thing.

Coining it

THE changes sweeping the former Soviet Union are proving highly profitable for De La Rue, the world's largest supplier of banknotes and passports. The company has just won a contract to supply nearly 5 million passports for the newly independent Lithuania, and it seems a fair bet that its sisters in the Commonwealth of Independent States will be keen to follow suit. Since Lithuania has only 3.7 million residents, could it be setting itself up as a "black market" centre for travel doc-



"In a hung parliament, which party should hang first?"

Humblyside think they are far better off today. "We were poor but happy in 1931," says one ancient resident of Croydon. "Nowadays people are rich, unhappy and greedy." Those "up North" say they are happier because they have more money and a greater variety of entertainment. As a Knaresborough woman put it: "I couldn't join the brownies because of lack of money." Whiffy here we come....

Grudge match

SKI holidays are not always as glamorous as they are made out to be, as one London couple found to their cost recently. Derek Goudge set out for a week's skiing in Kitzbühel, Austria, last month, with Nielson, the ski package holiday operator, and found all was not to their liking. After taking four hours to complete a 20-minute toboggan run, Goudge and his girlfriend were left standing in a bus for an hour en route to the airport due to lack of space. On their return, he wrote to complain, and received a reply that was lacking in one small detail. It was addressed to Mr Grudge.

Trading places

A CAREER with the London Stock Exchange can lead on to all manner of appointments. Hard to beat is the case of Michele Taikie, popular press officer at the tower, who leaves on Wednesday after four years on Throgmorton Street. Taikie, aged 27, flies home to her native Mauritius at the end of the week — just in time for her marriage to Allan Smith, a local hotelier, but there will be little time for lazing on the beach. Soon after, she is due to jet on to

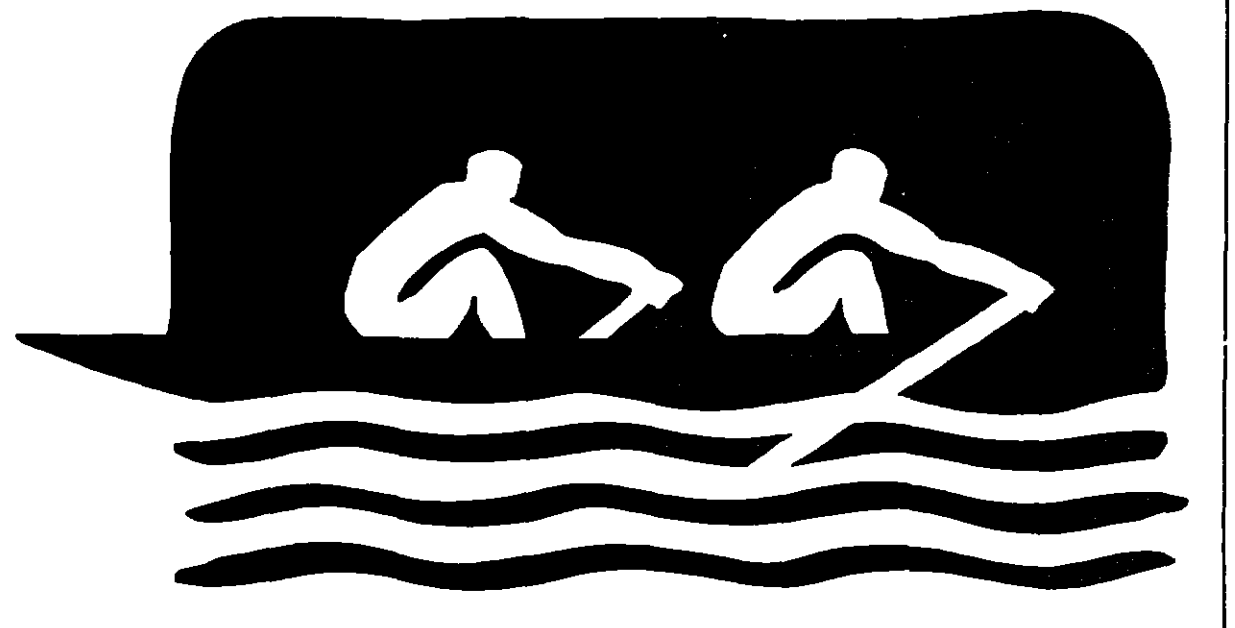
Peking, where her husband-to-be is taking up a post as manager at the luxurious China World Hotel. Taikie hopes to put her hard-earned stockbroking skills to good use in the World Trade Centre near the hotel.

Woman to account

WOMEN prime ministers may have been ten a penny recently, but the forbidding doors of central banks have proved harder to break down. Sirkka Haemäläinen will make it from July 1, when she becomes governor of the Bank of Finland, a country where women make up more than a third of members of parliament and are well represented in the cabinet. Haemäläinen, aged 52, an insider whose appointment was announced yesterday, owes her elevation to a monumental row between Esko Aho, the prime minister, and Rolf Kullberg, who finally resigned from the governorship last week. As denizens of Threadneedle Street might expect, this was a typical spat between government and central bank. Kullberg pegged Finland's currency, the markka, against Germany's mighty mark, making Finland a shadow member of the ERM. Aho promptly devalued the markka, and is now trying to do a budget deal with the unions to reverse the country's recession, leaving Kullberg to ponder that shadowing the mark did not mean shadowing the Bundesbank's independence. However, Scandinavians should have realised by now that putting a woman in charge is unlikely to prove a soft option.

JON ASHWORTH

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No	Company	Group	Share at time
1	PGI	Electrical	
2	Smithline	Industrial	
3	TIP Europe	Transport	
4	Reidway	Industrial	
5	Headlam	Shoe/Les	
6	Burnham Castl	Oil, Gas	
7	Granada	Industrial	
8	Tunell	Electrical	
9	Dawson	Textiles	
10	Harold Philip	Industrial	
11	Weymouth	Chemical	
12	UCL Group	Finance	
13	Synapse	Industrial	
14	Brown (N)	Drugs/Pharm	
15	US Pathology	Industrial	
16	Chemical	Industrial	
17	St. Michael's	Property	
18	Coal Per	Oil, Gas	
19	Towers	Food	
20	Brennan	Industrial	
21	Contain	Building	
22	Box (Henry)	Building	
23	Transfer Tech	Industrial	
24	Rederham	Industrial	
25	Plascon	Electrical	
26	Vest	Chemical	
27	Warrington	Industrial	
28	Seamless	Industrial	
29	Calderdale Rly	Building	
30	Calderdale Rly	Building	
31	Barrow	Building	
32	Lea Refr	Electrical	
33	Mil	Electrical	
34	Eve Group	Building	
35	BNS Rly	Building	
36	Stemlight	Industrial	
37	Thimble Ltd	Building	
38	MTL Ltd	Building	
39	WPP	Building	
40	BWI	Industrial	
41	Blackley Mtr	Motor/Air	
42	Br Aerospace	Motor/Air	
43	Pico	Industrial	
44	Hodkins Row	Industrial	

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Weekly Dividend						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

There were no valid claims for the weekly Portfolio Platinum prize of £4,000.

No	Company	Share at time
1	PGI	
2	Smithline	
3	TIP Europe	
4	Reidway	
5	Headlam	
6	Burnham Castl	
7	Granada	
8	Tunell	
9	Dawson	
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33	Mil	
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35	BNS Rly	
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42	Br Aerospace	
43	Pico	
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33	Mil	
34	Eve Group	
35	BNS Rly	
36	Stemlight	
37	Thimble Ltd	
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42	Br Aerospace	
43	Pico	
44	Hodkins Row	

No	Company	Share at time
1	PGI	
2	Smithline	
3	TIP Europe	
4	Reidway	
5	Headlam	
6	Burnham Castl	
7	Granada	
8	Tunell	
9	Dawson	
10	Harold Philip	
11	Weymouth	
12	UCL Group	
13	Synapse	
14	Brown (N)	
15	US Pathology	
16	Chemical	
17	St. Michael's	
18	Coal Per	
19	Towers	
20	Brennan	
21	Contain	
22	Box (Henry)	
23	Transfer Tech	
24	Rederham	
25	Plascon	
26	Vest	
27	Warrington	
28	Seamless	
29	Calderdale Rly	
30	Calderdale Rly	
31	Barrow	
32	Lea Refr	
33	Mil	
34	Eve Group	
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158.30	Boddington	152	-20	6.6	60
135.20	Bulmer (H)	259	-7	8.3	43
24.80	Burnham Bw	119	-1	4.2	4.8
129.00	Dawson (A)	240	+5	6.2	3.3
17.50	Eldridge P A	90	-4	2.6	3.9
1,948.60	Forster Brooming	87	1.2
86.00	Fuller's	430	1.2

Irish bonus may tempt National winner

By MICHAEL SEELY

THE Irish National at Fairyhouse on Easter Monday is now the only possible target left this season for Party Politics after that impressive victory over Romany King and Laura's Beau at Aintree on Saturday.

"The £50,000 bonus on offer for winning both races makes it very tempting," said the winning trainer, Nick Gaselee, yesterday "but, although nothing has been decided yet, the probability is that he won't run again this season. Because of his breathing problem, he can only give us his best when fresh."

After all the unfortunate controversy over the Mildmay fences earlier in the week, it was heartening to see the National's reputation as the world's most famous and sporting steeplechase stand even higher after Saturday's race, in which 22 of the 40 starters completed the course.

The criticism that the gradual modifications to the still-daunting National obstacles have spoiled the character of the race are unacceptable and without justification.

Once again, the National placed maximum demands on the endurance of horse and rider. And the usual searching gallop over four-and-a-half miles ruthlessly exposed weaknesses in the vanquished.

To the winner go the spoils of victory. And Party Politics, overcame the twin disadvantages of his wind infirmity and a tendency to bleed blood vessels, by at last fulfilling his tremendous potential.

Carl Llewellyn, as cool as a cucumber on the 18-hands high giant when winning the National on only his third ride in the race, said: "When I showed him the first, it looked so small that I immediately felt more confident. All the way up the straight, I kept thinking about how often they get caught in front. So I tried to save as much as I could and then gave him a smack at the elbow."

Romany King, now several

pounds higher in the handicap than when the National weights were published, ran his heart out to finish second. "He ran a great race and jumped very well. Lack of stamina beat him, but he'll be a strong horse next year. Both he and Cool Ground have done marvellously for us this season, and both have probably done enough," Toby Balding said.

The drying ground was against Laura's Beau, who stayed on strongly to finish third. "I could never quite get to the leaders," said Conor O'Dwyer.

Docklands Express, the 15-2 favourite, could find no more after the third fence from home and finished fourth. "He probably didn't quite see out the trip," said Kim Bailey. "He also looked very small against those fences. He's unlikely to run in the race again. We don't know yet if he's finished for the season."

Twin Oaks, surprisingly, never in the race with a chance, eventually finished a creditable fifth. "You've got to be pleased with that," said Gordon Richards. "He's fit and ready to go still. So if he comes through the race all right, we might run him somewhere again."

Martin Lynch, deputising for the injured Adrian McGuire, went well on Cool Ground until he became outpaced from the fourth fence from home. "Cool Ground had a winning chance at the last ditch, but ran a bit far from there on," said Balding. "They obviously don't come back after a hard race in the Gold Cup."

Slight drop

THE official attendance at the Grand National meeting on Saturday was 55,383 - slightly down on last year's total of 56,349.

There was a similar drop over the three days of the Aintree meeting, with 87,859 going through the turnstiles as against 88,741 in 1991.

Verdicts of the big-race riders

By JACK WATERMAN

THE roulette wheel of fortune that is National Hunt racing has seldom been better illustrated than by Richard Dunwoody's astonishing Aintree meeting.

Dunwoody was top jockey over the three days with four winners but had no fewer than six falls, one of those being on Brown Windsor at Becher's in the Martell Grand National.

Looking back on the race, Dunwoody said: "He gave me a super ride. We were going very well, but he was tending to jump left at the first five fences."

"Coming to Becher's, he jumped left again, which would usually have been OK to go into the Canal Turn. But Forest Ranger was on my inside and he went straight. We collided in mid-air and that was that."

The rest of the riders had these comments: Carl Llewellyn (Party Politics, 1st): "I didn't mean to hit the front when I did but he just pounded away in his own stride and I left him alone. It was only at the elbow that I gave him a reminder. I knew Romany King was there but I was confident mine would keep galloping."

Richard Guest (Romany King, 2nd): "Toby Balding was not too pleased with me for coming too soon but I couldn't have ridden him any other way. For an eight-year-old he was brilliant."

Conor O'Dwyer (Laura's Beau, 3rd): "He jumped super but we needed softer ground for the rest to come back to us."

Peter Scudamore (Docklands Express, 4th): "He did everything right and three out I thought I had the beating of the three ahead of me but then they started to go away and I had no answer."

Neale Doughty (Twin Oaks, 5th): "He ran a great race but was always struggling on ground that was a shade faster than he likes."

Simon Burroughs (Just So, 6th): "It was brilliant but they went too fast for me over the first two-and-a-half miles. We were flat out but made up a fantastic amount



Down and out: second favourite Brown Windsor makes an early exit from the Martell Grand National at Becher's Brook on the first circuit

of ground towards the finish. A bit more rain would have helped."

Andy Ormsley (Old Applejack, 7th): "He was going as well as anything crossing the Melting Road. He ran a terrific race."

Robbie Supple (Over The Road, 8th): "On the day he just wasn't good enough."

Chris Grant (Stay On Tracks, 9th): "He ran well but just got tired coming into the straight. I don't think I'm ever going to win it."

Martin Lynch (Cool Ground, 10th): "Basically he gave me a very, very good ride and it was a privilege to have the chance to pop round. But perhaps the Gold Cup had taken more out of him than was thought and from Becher's second time he was running with a flat battery."

Hywel Davies (Ghofar, 11th): "He came back with a cut in his side but the more I coaxed him the better he went. I'd love to come back next year."

Dai Tegg (Forest Ranger, 12th): "We had a brilliant ride. He jumped like a stag but I was lucky to be half a length up at Becher's or we might have gone at the same time as Brown Windsor."

Jamie Osborne (Whats The Crack, 13th): "Only his jumping kept him in it. They were always going half a gear too fast for us."

Peter Niven (Rubika, 14th): "Everything was OK at first but they went too fast for me."

Eamon Murphy (Golden Minstrel, 15th): "Superb ride. He really enjoyed himself and loved every minute."

Mark Dwyer (Auntie Dot, 16th): "She simply ran out of petrol."

Charlie Swan (Roc De Prince, 17th): "He jumped well but if the ground had been a bit softer he would have been up there."

Paul Hoolley (Mighty Falcon, 18th): "A wonderful ride on the youngest horse in the race but he was always mid-division and couldn't quite get into the argument."

Jason Callaghan (Radical Lady, 19th): "Dream of a ride but we were outpaced from start to finish."

Michael Bowley (Willsford, 20th): "He jumped super but we faded out at Valentine's second time round."

Ben de Haan (Team Challenge, 21st): "A great ride but the rest were always going too quick for him and we couldn't lay up."

Ronnie Beggan (Sirrah Jay, 22nd and last): "It's the first time I've got round. It was great. O'Brien (Rawhide, unseated rider at 1st fence): "He stood off way too far."

400 MARTELL GRAND NATIONAL (Handicap chase grade 1, 200-240, 4m 4f) PARTY POLITICS b g Polito - Spin Agnes (Mrs D Thompson) 8-107 C Llewellyn (14-1) 2. Romany King b g Crash Course - Winsome Lady (L Garrett) 8-103 R Guest (16-1) 3. Laura's Beau b g Beau Charmeur - Lumbago (J P Moloney) 8-100 C O'Dwyer (15-1) 4. Docklands Express b g Roscoe Blake - Southern Moss (R Barnes) 10-112 P Scudamore (15-2) 5. Twin Oaks (5th), 10 Cool Ground (10th), 12 Forest Ranger (12th), 13 Whats The Crack (13th), 22 Over The Road (8th), 23 Bonanza Boy (9), Ghofar (11th), 28 Rubika (14th), 33 Scudamore (15), Omerta (16), 35 Old Applejack (7th), 40 Sea De Prince (17th), 50 Radcliffe (19), 51 Bonanza Boy (9), 52 Golden Minstrel (15th), 53 Golden Minstrel (15th), 54 Golden Minstrel (15th), 55 Golden Minstrel (15th), 56 Golden Minstrel (15th), 57 Golden Minstrel (15th), 58 Golden Minstrel (15th), 59 Golden Minstrel (15th), 60 Golden Minstrel (15th), 61 Golden Minstrel (15th), 62 Golden Minstrel (15th), 63 Golden Minstrel (15th), 64 Golden Minstrel (15th), 65 Golden Minstrel (15th), 66 Golden Minstrel (15th), 67 Golden Minstrel (15th), 68 Golden Minstrel (15th), 69 Golden Minstrel (15th), 70 Golden Minstrel (15th), 71 Golden Minstrel (15th), 72 Golden Minstrel (15th), 73 Golden Minstrel (15th), 74 Golden Minstrel (15th), 75 Golden Minstrel (15th), 76 Golden Minstrel (15th), 77 Golden Minstrel (15th), 78 Golden 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City find finishing touch to sway the title balance

Call to arms: Whelan celebrates his goal yesterday with Thomas and Rush

"In ice skating terms, our marks for artistic impression were better than our marks for technical ability," he observed wryly. In other words, City converted the chances they created, Leeds did not.

Leeds displayed such fluidity of movement and economy of effort when in possession that even when two

MANCHESTER CITY: A Cotton, A Hill, N
 Poirton, M Brennan, K Curle, M Vork, D
 Whits, M Sherron, N Quinn (sub: I
 Brightwell), F Simpson, G McMeahon.
LEEDS UNITED: J Lukic, E Cantona, A
 Dorigo, D Barry, C Fairclough, C Whyte, G
 Strachen, R Wallace, L Chapman, G
 McAllister, G Speed.
 Referee: J Watson.

At Highbury.

Att: 41,869.

Ref: M Bodenham

HT: 0-0.

LIVERPOOL 1
after extra time

PORTSMOUTH 1

Scorers: Whelan 117

Anderston 110

Bookings: Whelan 22, Rush 105

Beresford 8, Kuhl 113

White 113

Awford 115

Subs: Verison 45 (Burrows)

Aspinall 10

(Chamberlain)

Whittingham 108

(McLoughlin)

LIVERPOOL

PORTSMOUTH

Shots (on target/total)

6 17

8 13

Goals (left/right)

6 5

5 4

Crosses (def/right)

23 25

15 30

Free kicks/pens sgmt

16 -

15 -

Offsides

- 3

- 9

Possession (gained/lost)

37 113

40 113

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2)

PORTSMOUTH (4-4-2)

Player Goal Crosses Fouls

Player Goal attempt L R By On

B Gough - - - -

R Jones 1 6 4 - -

D Burrows 2 - - - -

S Nicol 2 1 6 2

R Whelan 3 1 4 2

M Wright 2 - 2 3

S McMillan 1 6 1 6

R Houghton 1 4 4 2

I Rush 2 1 1 6

J Barnes 4 7 - 2

M Thomas 2 1 2 4

B Vassell 1 1 1 1

M Marsh 1 - 1 - -

Player Goal Crosses Fouls

Player Goal attempt L R By On

A Whelan - - - -

J Barnesford 1 - - -

A Awford - - - 2

J Barnesford 1 4 - 3

A McLoughlin - - - 2

K Symons - - - 1

C Burns - 1 1 1

N West - 1 1 1

M Kuhl 2 4 4 3

C Charles 1 - - 3

R Chamberlain 1 - - -

D Anderston 2 15 1 2

W Aspinall 1 - - 3

G Whittingham - - - 1

Luton slacken their bonds

LUTON TOWN: A Chamberlain; J James, R Harvey, C Kamara, J Drayner, T Pasha, I Varadi, B Stein, M Harford, M Pembbridge, D Prosser.

WIMBLEDON: H Segers; V Ryan, T Phelan, W Birton, J Scates, S Fitzgerald, P Miller, R Earle, J Fashanu, L Sanchez (sub: A Clarke), G Dobbs.

Referee: B Hill.

FA Cup Semi-finals		Second division		Third division		Fourth division		GM Vauxhall Conference		B and D Scottish League Premier division		First division		Weekend statistics	
LIVERPOOL (1)	1 PORTSMOUTH (0)	BARNESLEY (0)	0 DERBY (2)	BIRMINGHAM (2)	2 READING (0)	BARNET (0)	0 NORTHPTON (0)	BATH (0)	0 BARROW (0)	DUNDEE (1)	1 ST JOHNST (1)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)	ALL the leading scores added to their totals this week. Airdrie moving to an outright lead with 38 goals, while stretching his tally in the first division to 50. However, it is in the third and fourth divisions that the most goals have been scored. Southport are now just four points behind the top scorers in the second weekend running. Scarborough had the lowest attendance.	
Whitby 189	Anderton 110	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
(at Highways: sat 0.4 after 90 mins)															
SUNDRALD (1)	1 NORWICH (0)	BRISTOL C (1)	2 LECCESTER (1)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
Byrne 34	40,102	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
(at Ribblesdale)															
Barclays League First division															
CHELSEA (1)	2 WEST HAM (1)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
Woolwich 29	27,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
COVENTRY (0)	0 ARSENAL (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
14,132	14,132	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
Colchester 65	14,338	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
Derby (0)	0 SHEFFIELD (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
17,121	17,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
WOLVERHAMPTON (1)	2 WIMBLEDON (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
17,121	17,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
MAN CITY (0)	2 LEEDS (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
11,121	11,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
NOTT M (0)	0 SHEFFIELD WED (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
11,121	11,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
SHEFFIELD UTD (1)	2 OLDHAM (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
11,121	11,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
WOLVERHAMPTON (1)	2 WIMBLEDON (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	BRISTOL R (1)	1 SWANSEY (0)	CHESHAM (1)	1 YORK (0)	BOSTON (1)	2 ALTRINCHAM (1)	CLACKMANNON (1)	0 ABERDEEN (0)	GLYDEBANK (1)	1 AYR UTD (0)		
17,121	17,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121	10,121		
HFS LOCAL LEAGUE: Premier division		Barnesley: Airdrie, Banger City, 1; Brierley 3; Gainsborough 1; Huddersfield 1; Harrogate 1; Har													

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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

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MONDAY APRIL 6 1992

Sunderland defeat another first division club on their way to the FA Cup final at Wembley

Byrne brings joy to Wearside

Sunderland.....1
Norwich City.....0

By CLIVE WHITE

AMID scenes of unfettered joy, which could not have contrasted more sharply or poignantly with the tragic occasion when Hillsborough last staged a semi-final three years ago, Sunderland reached the FA Cup final yesterday with another thoroughly deserved victory over first division opposition.

The euphoria that has carried Sunderland aloft throughout this competition, however disturbing their second division form has been, again enabled them to raise their game and overturn the odds as Norwich City went the same way as West Ham United and Chelsea before them, although this time without recourse to a replay.

Almost inevitably, the hero of the hour was again John Byrne, their Republic of Ireland international, who maintained his record of scoring in each round to bring his cup total to seven and his overall tally this season to 21. If he scores in the final, against Liverpool or Portsmouth, he will become only the tenth player in the 120-year-old competition to maintain a 100 per cent record throughout. The £200,000 Sunderland paid Brighton for him earlier in the season has long since looked a steal.

It would be over-estimating Norwich's season to say that they were a bitter disappointment. Yet to those people who knew them as a pure footballing side, they were certainly a huge let-down.

Their decision earlier in the season to sacrifice a few of

their principles may have saved their first division necks but it also probably cost them a visit to Wembley. Quite simply, they failed to play sufficient football.

They did, however, play their part in an honest, if unspectacular match, that will have done much to repair the good name of the Sheffield ground which, nevertheless, must be forever tainted by the death of 95 people there in the 1989 semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest.

The sight of both sets of supporters applauding each other at the end was in keeping with the relationship established between the clubs in the 1985 League Cup final — better known as the "Friendly Final".

Fortunately, the scenes yesterday will live long in the memory, certainly that of the north east, no matter the outcome at Wembley on May 9.

Should Liverpool be their opponents, it will provide obvious comparisons with 1973 when Sunderland, then also a second division side, achieved an unforgettable and totally unexpected victory over the great Leeds United team.

If Sunderland, who have not returned to Wembley since in the FA Cup, go on to repeat the triumph, one can expect Malcolm Crooks, their coach, to be given the freedom of the city, even if the manager's chair is still kept from him.

Sunderland have declined to promote him to the position of manager in succession to Dennis Smith until their safety in the second division has been secured.

"They might have to give



Arms deal: Byrne, of Sunderland, celebrates his winning goal against Norwich City yesterday

me a new title for Wembley," Crosby said. "There's too much talk about the job; we've got important League games to win yet."

With Crosby reluctant to comment further on the matter, it was left to others to highlight the absurdity of the situation. "Whoever heard of a caretaker-manager leading out a team at Wembley," Bob Stokoe, Sunderland's most famous manager, said.

It was again hard to comprehend their failing in the League, watching them take firm control of this semi-final. They say that a good start is essential in such games but it did not seem to do much good for Norwich, who must have been boosted by the news of Fleck's recovery from injury.

Norwich were already beginning to run out of ideas when Sunderland scored the all-important goal.

Byrne began and ended the move, though the surging burst into space by Rush, and

the accuracy of Atkinson's cross, were as crucially important as was Norwich's absence in defence. Byrne, standing unmarked at the far post, could hardly fail to miss with his header.

Norwich's final ball was never good enough and too often they were hit long and aimlessly towards the Sunderland goalmouth, where Rogan dominated the aerial waves. The quality stuff all came from Sunderland, for whom Bracewell and Davenport produced performances that turned back the clock to their finest days.

Norwich were left to rue their one outstanding chance of the match when Fleck, managing to escape his jailers, crossed hard and low in the 84th minute only for Smith, for some inexplicable reason, to decline the chance.

Liverpool escape, page 28

At Hillsborough, Att: 40,462, Ref: N Midgley
HT: 0-0, NORWICH 0, SUNDERLAND 1
Scorers: Byrne
Bookings: Fox 15, Bowen 75
Subs: Sutch 72 (Sutton), Bennett 60 (Ball)

	NORWICH	SUNDERLAND
Shots (on target/total)	5/10	2/8
Goals (left/right)	3/5	2/3
Crosses (left/right)	21/27	17/14
Free kicks/pens agst	12/	13/
Offsides	3/	8/
Possession (gained/lost)	27/84	28/84

NORWICH (4-4-2)				SUNDERLAND (4-4-2)			
Player	Attempt	L	R	Player	Attempt	L	R
M Walton	-	-	-	A Norman	-	-	-
C Woodhouse	-	-	-	A Rogan	-	-	-
I Rutherford	-	-	-	K Sed	-	-	-
J Poulton	-	-	-	P Hardman	-	-	-
R Fox	1	6	6	D Rush	-	-	-
R Fleck	2	1	1	P Brimicombe	-	-	-
R Newman	1	2	2	P Davenport	2	2	3
C Sutton	4	1	2	G Armstrong	-	-	-
M Bowen	2	14	1	J Byrne	4	2	2
D Smith	1	1	1	B Atkinson	1	2	2
Unused: R Ullsthorpe	-	-	-	G Bennett	-	-	-
				Unused: K Brady	-	-	-

THE NUMBER of clear cut-chances went clearly in Norwich's favour, five of ten goal attempts, while Sunderland had two on target, one being Byrne's goal, his 21st of the season. Norwich also pumped ball

after ball into the penalty area (48 crosses in total) — Bowen the main provider from the right with 14 crosses, and Woodhouse with ten crosses from the left — and forced eight corners.

Mansell's title drive gathers searing pace

FROM NORMAN HOWELL IN SÃO PAULO

THE elusive world title shifted into view for Nigel Mansell yesterday. He won his third consecutive grand prix in this year's Formula One world championship, taking the chequered flag here 28 seconds ahead of his team-mate, Riccardo Patrese.

The two Williams-Renaults lapped all the other cars which lasted the course on the gruelling Interlagos track.

Michael Schumacher was third. The Ferraris were fourth and fifth, and sixth, surprisingly, was Michele Alboreto in the Footwork.

This was an extraordinary achievement by Williams and Renault. The result of the Brazilian grand prix was never in doubt as both cars sped into the first corner. Patrese again surprising everyone with a scorching start. The Italian kept the lead for 32 laps before he lost out to Mansell after the complicated lottery of tyre changing.

Then, the two drivers had been engaged in a tense struggle with Mansell trying everything to pass Patrese.

But once he was ahead, Mansell took off and the only time he slowed down was to pick up a union flag after he crossed the finish line. Earlier, he had expressed some doubts about the gearbox and complained of having spent a sleepless night caused by the injuries suffered in an accident on Saturday.

Then, in the qualifying session, Mansell had tried to overtake Senna and spun off the track, crashing heavily into a protective wall. Mansell already had pole position secured.

It was a calamitous day for the McLaren-Honda team. The world champions have clearly brought in the "fly-by-wire" cars too early.

Despite the huge effort put

into taking six cars and nearly 100 people to Brazil, Gerhard Berger could only manage four laps while Ayrton Senna retired after 10. The Austrian's car had an engine change in the morning, but his team could not get it to work. So he started from the pit lane in Senna's race car.

They fixed his electrical and transmission faults, but by the time he got going the engine had overheated. Senna fared little better, coming third into the first corner and holding that for 12 more laps, but then, on the thirteenth, both Schumacher and Jean Alesi soared past him. The engine was intermittently cutting out and the end was near for the world champion, a humiliating result in front of his home crowd.

It was also an unlucky race for Martin Brundle who, despite the fine performances of his team-mate, Schumacher, has never lost heart and has been racing with great courage. Sixth into the first straight, he moved up to fifth and then tried to take a slowing Alesi.

The two cars came together and only the Ferrari survived the crash. It was an early bath, too, for Johnny Herbert as he was unceremoniously pushed on to the grass by two Ligiers, which were battling each other. Ferrari, though being lapped by the winner, could conceivably claim to have had the best race of the season as both cars finished and earned points.

But the reality is that this was achieved with last year's engine, presumably not the best way to progress towards challenging Williams and Renault. The Lion is well and truly roaring now and it looks as if there are only sheep left for him to prey on.

O'DETAILS

RESULT: 1. N Mansell (GB), Williams, 1:18.191m; 2. R Patrese (It), Williams, at 28.32sec; 3. M Schumacher (Ger), Benetton, at one lap; 4. J Alesi (Fr), Ferrari, at one lap; 5. I Capelli (It), Ferrari, at one lap; 6. M Alboreto (It), Footwork, at one lap; 7. G Morbidelli (It), Minardi, at two laps; 8. J J. Lehto (Fin), Dallara, at two laps; 9. U Kariyama (Japan), Venturi, at three laps; 10. M Hakkinen (Fin), Lotus, at four laps.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (after three rounds): Drivers: 1. Mansell, 30pts; 2. Patrese, 18; 3. Schumacher, 11; 4. G Berger (Austria), 5; 5. A Senna (Br), 4; 6. Alesi, 3; equal 7. A de Cossans (It) and Capelli (It), 2; equal 8. J Herbert (GB), M Hakkinen (Fin) and Alboreto (It), 1; 10. Constructors: 1. Williams, 48pts; 2. Benetton, 11; 3. McLaren, 9; 4. Ferrari, 5; equal 5. U Kariyama (Japan), Venturi, at three laps; 10. M Hakkinen (Fin), Lotus, at four laps.

Andrew helps to keep Toulouse on course

By CHRIS THAU

ROB Andrew, playing his first full league game of rugby union for Toulouse, made a telling contribution to a valuable 16-12 away win against their main pool rivals, Bourgoin-Jallieu, a side captained by the French No. 8, Marc Cellier.

The England stand-off half scored eight points from two penalties and a conversion to help his side qualify for the knock-out stages of the French championship, starting in three weeks time.

Toulouse are the leading

contenders for the title, held by Bègles, and Andrew features prominently in the plans of their coach, Jean-Claude Skrela.

Another travelling international, Troy Coker, the Australian lock and No. 8, is unlikely to play for Harlequins in the Pilkington Cup final on May 2. The game coincides with Queensland's critical match with Auckland in the Super Six competition in Brisbane.

More rugby, page 27

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Decision day in players' dispute

By PETER BALL

THE Premier League has its last chance to avoid a confrontation with the players when they meet at Lancaster Gate this morning. Shortly before the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) announces the result of its ballot, which is expected to endorse industrial action almost unanimously.

When talks between the two sides over the players'

demand for ten per cent, their present entitlement, of the television contract income broke up on Wednesday, it had been expected that further talks would take place.

However, with Rick Parry, the Premier League's chief executive, spending three days in France, the meetings have not been able to take place, leaving both sides on the brink.

To some observers that suggested that the league is ac-

tively looking for confrontation, but Parry denied that last night.

There is little doubt that some clubs will be pressing for a hard line, but there was some hope that the sensible parry, with Peter Robinson, of Liverpool, and Martin Edwards, of Manchester United, expected to play a part, will carry the day, and Parry, as always, remained optimistic after a series of soundings yesterday.

"I think there will be some positive movement from our side," Parry said. "We are not a long way apart. Gordon has had conversations with a number of chairmen over the last few days, and I think the mood is fairly positive."

Parry is expected to phone Gordon Taylor, the PFA's chief executive, as soon as the meeting has ended, if not before. If there is no agreement, the players will begin their action.

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Germans lift ban on Krabbe

By JOHN GOODBODY

THE German Athletics Federation (DLV) yesterday lifted the four-year ban on Katrin Krabbe, the world 100 and 200 metres champion, a decision that anti-doping campaigners believe will be a setback to their cause.

However, Krabbe and fellow-German international Silke Möller and Grit Breuer, who were banned on February 15 because they allegedly manipulated urine samples during random tests in South Africa, may still not be able to run at the Barcelona Olympics.

Professor Arnold Ljungqvist, chairman of the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAAF) medical commission, said: "The decision could be declared invalid. The athletes have no reason to feel safe despite this remarkable turn-around."

"I am very surprised but I am not disappointed over the decision. The Germans received a punishment that suddenly does not exist. Et-

ther you are guilty or you are not guilty. What are you supposed to think after this evidence?"

The IAAF is likely to discuss the affair at a meeting at the end of May and the German federation will have to submit a complete report.

The lifting of the ban was announced by Guenter Emig, the chairman of the DLV's independent legal commission, which met for 14 hours on Saturday and then for a further three-and-a-half hours yesterday. He



Krabbe: career saved

spoke of gaps in the testing procedure, saying: "There are holes in the chain of evidence. It has been proved that there were people present at the doping test who should not have been there."

The urine samples of the three athletes were found to be identical by Professor Manfred Donike, of Cologne, one of the leading experts on drug analysis in the world and a member of the International Olympic Committee's medical commission. The samples were given in Stellenbosch on January 24 and then flown to Germany.

Emig said: "The bottles in which the samples were placed were not sealed properly, according to IAAF rules. It was proved that the secure transport of the samples was not guaranteed. The long time that the journey took [five days] has cast doubts on the validity of the procedure."

However, Professor Joseph Keul, who was an official doctor at the Winter Olympics, said: "I am

speechless. It can only have been manipulation. The samples were identical. Of that there is no doubt."

Rudiger Nicker, who leads the German federation's fight against drug-taking, said that the ruling will "definitely make our task all the harder". Norbert Lauen, another German anti-doping official, added: "I fear that it could make doping testing very difficult, financially and in practical terms. It means that someone, or maybe more than one person, may have to accompany samples everywhere to rule out manipulation."

Krabbe said: "It is a weight off my shoulders. We knew we were always innocent and that the correct decision would be made. It will take a while to get over the stress of all this but we have to get training hard."

Jos Hermens, Krabbe's manager, said: "I thought that eventually we would win."

★



LOOKS
Constituency
chic — what to
wear on the
campaign trail



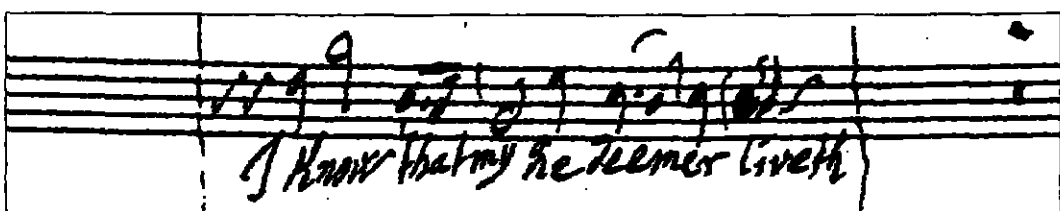
LIFE & TIMES

MONDAY APRIL 6 1992

EDUCATION
Can any party
prevent
teacher
redundancies?



Hallelujah, 'Messiah' is 250 years old



An ageing opera composer who had lost the knack of pulling London audiences, an actress who found it prudent to go to ground for a while after a messy adultery case, an attack from a half-demented dean, and a work so controversial that it scarcely dared to speak its name — the antecedents of Handel's *Messiah* hardly prefigured its future as the most praised and probably the most loved choral work ever written.

The oratorio had its first hearing 250 years ago, on April 13, 1742, in a music hall on the banks of the Liffey. The anniversary is being celebrated by performances in London and Dublin. In London last week it was performed at St George's, Hanover Square (where Handel regularly worshipped in the latter part of his life) in the form in which it was first heard: with the relatively slim orchestral resources that mid-18th century Dublin could supply. In Dublin itself, a battery of international stars under Sir Neville Marriner will give a gala performance next Monday — the anniversary itself — before an audience which will include the television cameras of Channel 4 and Radio Telefís Éireann.

Nobody is likely to call it sacrilegious, or criticise performers for joining in with Sir Neville's "club of fiddlers". The doubts that Handel must have felt about the work's reception were conclusively resolved not instantly, but within his lifetime.

A generation later, *Messiah* had risen almost to the status of holy writ. In this country it came to be performed incessantly as a kind of seasonal ritual, half-devotional and half-patriotic. For audiences and a host of amateur and professional singers *Messiah* still stands as the archetype of the large choral work. Yet it was written as an offbeat venture at a low point of Handel's fortunes. In form, it is unlike anything he had written before, and not very like the work he wrote afterwards. Although it helped to change the course of his career away from opera and towards oratorio, it is so much an odd one out among his oratorios that it almost deserves to stand in a category of its own.

All his life, Handel had been a man of the theatre. For 30 years the German immigrant had entertained London audiences with stately operas on classical themes,

George Hill
follows the score
of a masterwork
which has
topped the charts
since the 18th
century

sung in Italian, with Italian leading singers. But in 1727 John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* had created a taste for a less exalted mixture of ballad tunes, contemporary plots, cheap scenery and the English language. Handel and his competitors in the Italian opera found themselves chasing audiences who were growing tired of their product, in an increasingly vicious and faction-ridden rivalry.

Stubborn and fully confident that he was writing superbly well, Handel continued at first to turn out operas which would not find appreciative audiences for another 200 years. Only since 1945 has a new breed of singers and producers revealed their dramatic power.

He refused to experiment with opera in English, but tested the market with a couple of oratorios, which were coolly received. These oratorios were a kind of opera without acting or scenery, based on dramatic stories from the Old Testament. Their dubious reception was partly to do with the fact that raiding scripture for mere entertainment in the opera house — that hotbed of sin — was seen by the pious as a degradation.

After a series of washout seasons, Handel must have been thinking of giving up London for good. But at that moment he was invited by the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to come and perform a series of charity concerts in Dublin.

The duke is usually thought of as one of the less distinguished members of the Cavendish line; but by this one act he initiated a course of events which must have brought more pleasure and benefit to humanity than any other act by his illustrious heirs and forebears.

The invitation gave Handel the chance to write an oratorio on a text

so sensitive that it demanded a discreet, out-of-town try-out. His collaborator, Charles Jennens, had sent him a script which did not merely flesh out an Old Testament legend, but presented the central Christian drama of incarnation and redemption in words drawn from the Bible itself. The very words of God dragged before the footlights — would the public ever accept it?

Jennens had done his work brilliantly. He had turned an abstract doctrinal theme into a three-act opera without characters or setting, yet rich in contrasts of mood and pictorial detail. Handel must have latched to set it. But he had been too much the professional to write without any prospect of performance. Now he threw himself on the text, and finished it, with many struggles, in just 24 days. In November 1741 he crossed to Ireland for what proved to be a ten-month season. He had arranged for a number of London musicians to make their way to Dublin to form a nucleus of performers.

One of them was Susanna Cibber, sister of the composer Thomas Arne. An actress of distinction, she was a singer of only moderate gifts. According to Handel's friend and biographer, Charles Burney, "her voice was a thread", but he recorded that "Handel was very fond of her" and wrote for her carefully to avoid overburdening her.

She was still recovering from a recent scandalous embezzlement in London. After tolerating an affair she was having with another man, her husband, Theophilus Cibber, had exposed the whole thing to the public by attempting to sue the man for adultery.

Dublin was then at the height of its Augustan golden age. The great Dean Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*, now old and ill, still brooded over St Patrick's Cathedral. For the prosperous Protestant upper class, the presence of the famous Handel must have confirmed Dublin's claims as a cultural capital.

In Fishamble Street, a new "Music Hall" (now demolished, like so much of Georgian Dublin, except for one wall and the doorway) provided a worthy setting for his concerts, which were very successful. Nevertheless, he delayed the premiere of *Messiah* until he had been in the city for five months.



Winning scores: George Frideric Handel, the composer of *Messiah*, in a portrait by Philippe Mercier, probably from the late 1720s

A choir had to be recruited locally. In January, Swift gave permission for singers — *Voxes Choral* — from the cathedral choir to take part in Handel's concert. Next day he sent another letter, painful to read — a last terrifying flash of the old *saeva indignatio*: "... whereas it hath been reported, that I gave a licence to certain vicars to assist at a club of fiddlers in Fishamble Street, I do hereby declare that I remember no such licence to have been ever signed or sealed by me; and that if ever such pretended licence shall be produced, I do hereby annul and vacate the said licence, treating my... Sub-Dean and Chapter to punish such vicars as shall ever appear there, as songsters, fiddlers, pipers, trumpeters, drummers, drum-majors, or in any sonal quality, according to the flagitious aggravations of their respective disobedience, rebellion, perfidy and ingratitude."

This superb malediction rolled out into empty air: the choristers sang in Fishamble Street two days later. It may have been the last straw for the cathedral authorities, however, for a few weeks later chancery guardians were appointed to manage Swift's affairs. At the end of Handel's stay he visited the dean, but found him scarcely able to speak (though he was to live in agony for another three years).

Messiah was received with raptures. One member of the audience, a person, was so transported with Mrs Cibber's expressive performance of "He was despised" that he rose from his seat and tactlessly exclaimed: "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven!"

The performance made £400 for charity. Part of this was devoted to the relief of debtors, and made possible the release of 142 debtors from prison.

Even after his Dublin triumphs, Handel continued to treat *Messiah* with caution. Back in London, he put off its first night for months, at last slipping it into the tail end of a successful season of other oratorios, and suppressing its explosive title altogether on the first few occasions. It was never published in his lifetime.

These precautions did not prevent hostile reactions. A letter in the

press declared: "An Oratorio either is an Act of Religion or it is not; if it is, I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it in or a Company of Players fit Ministers of God's word... what a Profanation of God's Name..."

Criticism muttered on for many years, but was drowned out by a steadily rising chorus of praise. Handel adroitly maintained the initial link with charity: after 1750 he conducted annual performances at Captain Coram's hospital for foundlings. This custom did much to imprint *Messiah* on the consciousness of English music lovers.

Doctrinal objections faltered before the good works of a piece of music which, in the words of Charles Burney "fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan, and enriched succeeding managers of oratorios, more than any single musical production in this or any country".

Its continuing power to fill the coffers of countless charities is one of several non-musical reasons for its permanent popularity: audiences can feel that it is almost an act of virtue just to listen to it.

Nor is it only a spectator sport: anyone who has sung in a choir must have sung *Messiah*. To sing it worthily is no easier than with any other great music, but it is easy to sing at a level where one may feel part of the drama and the generous warmheartedness of the music.

It is robust enough to survive almost any abuse. When 3,000 English sopranos, altos, tenors and basses in the annual Albert Hall *"Messiah from Scratch"* bellow through the intricacies of the great "Amen" — and then hold their breath not to spoil the giddy void of silence four bars from the end — musical purists may shudder, but Handel's ghost must smile to hear that the show still goes on.

INSIDE

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The Media section will now appear on Tuesday. Science this week is on Wednesday.

TOMORROW
Shaw's phonetic alphabet

You can't put a price on wasted time

WORKING LIFE: Libby Purves on the trials of touting for trade

April has sprung, and any day now my friend Barry will be off on his rounds again. He sells swimming pools, and the first watery rays of spring sunlight start his telephone ringing as if by solar power. Between now and June he will quarter the countryside with his trusty car-phone at his side, calling as requested on ambitious householders.

He will unfold brochures about expandable liners, he will prod the soil, narrow his eyes, take copious measurements and say: "Did you want the spoil landscaping?" Finally he will hand over a video of consenting couples in tracksuits indulging in DIY grouting. He will do this five times a day with a straight face, before going home to write out estimates.

Take off your hat to him, for the man deserves an Oscar. All the time he is discussing silica sand filters, Barry knows in his heart that most of these punters are pure fantasists, as likely to order a Learjet as a swimming pool. Some of them call him out year after year with

different schemes to waste his time: now musing on a marble pool in the rose-garden, now toying with a solar-heated conservatory Jacuzzi. Barry keeps on smiling and estimating, just in case. You never know.

Estimates, pitches, presentations, auditions, pilot programmes: most trades contain an element of casting your bread upon the waters and watching it float away.

I say trades, because the professions tend to weasel out of it: when did you last get rival solicitors to estimate their costs, or rival doctors pitching for the contract to do your Bupa cartilage? Even estate agents have started covering themselves against failure by charging an extra fee for producing details of your house even if they never sell it.

But honest trades almost always have to pitch, estimate or audition

for work. And a heartbreaking business it is. What hell to be an architect in competition. Do they get paid for those dinky models? Do they smash them in fury when they fail?

Pity the torment of the unpublished author, but pity also the advertising account manager who works night and day on a super new way to sell spaghetti hoops, and whose artful structure of smoked-salmon buffets, storyboards and smiling girls is kicked down in ten minutes.

Weep for the independent TV producer who spends weeks clipping together snazzy bits of desktop publishing, complete with imitation preview cuttings from imaginary newspapers, all for some why-faced mandarin to sneer at.



Some producers actually research a whole real set of willing film subjects for their proposal, even though those actual people will be well over their plastic surgery before the money comes through, so the work will have to be done all over again. It doesn't matter. The cus-

tomiser is always right, the swine. What does this endless pitching do to the human soul? Psychologists, never having had to audition themselves, tend to concentrate on the warring effects of sexual rejection or being ripped unthinkingly from the maternal breast. They never give a thought to the equally cruel routine rejection of one's work.

For estimates are work. Barry might do a brilliant offer, cutting the pipework costs by a cunning detour under the garage and throwing in a free inflatable crocodile: only to be totally ignored.

An actor may vainly work all week on an audition, a salesman produce a customised proposal, or a copywriter put her whole soul into a new way of telling the aspirational AB woman that Renaults

make your heels grow higher. All for nothing.

I once had a flirtation with the world of commercial voiceovers. They shut me up in a cellar in Soho for two full hours and made me intone "Natural Choice — it's the natural choice" in a thousand different voices ("Could you put more warmth into the choice, lovey? Think nuts, think furry squirrels!"). Drained and ashamed, I went home only to be told a week later that "The client's decided to go with Richard Briers". I snarled that I hoped they would be very happy together, and vowed to stick to honest toil.

The following week a magazine asked for a 500-word synopsis and then lost it, and the BBC, having made me do a pilot programme (pretty naff, actually), kept a nine-month silence and then without a word opened the series with

Another Woman presenting it. She even used one of my jokes. And was there an NHS Rejection Therapist to turn to? There was not.

At least if you have estimated, auditioned or posted an unsolicited MS, you have had time to prepare for failure. Even worse is the poisonous showbiz practice of the Availability Check. This involves a brisk woman ringing you up and asking if you are interested in going to the Seychelles for a week's filming, starring in the *Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, guesting for Edna Everage or undergoing some similar life-transforming experience. She will be most insistent that you "pencil it in" and keep the dates free. Chat-show researchers then spend an hour asking your opinion on everything from incest to City fraud. Then silence. Ring back and she will say that the client loved the idea, only Richard Briers came free...

TOMORROW
Midlife: Neil Lyndon

23rd June, 1992
An important date for European
Ceramics. Mark it in your diary.

Last October, this charming Meissen cabinet tray dating from 1870 successfully sold at Sotheby's for £5,280, well in excess of its upper estimate. Last month's sale of Continental Ceramics and Glass was 80% sold, indicating that the market for fine ceramics and glass remains strong with good prices being paid for high quality items.



The Meissen mark for the cabinet of the 19th century and first quarter of the 20th century

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS SALE: 13TH APRIL

Many exceptional pieces from the 16th to the 19th century, including Meissen, Sèvres, German Faience, Venetian and Biedermeier glass, have already been entered for our June European Ceramics and Glass sale. If you would like to include fine porcelain or glass in this sale, please contact Peter Arney or Simon Cottle of our Ceramics Department on 071-408 5134/3 by 13th April latest.

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REMEMBRANCE: Unlike most Old Masters, Rembrandt has been viewed for the last decade, owing largely to the activities of the Rembrandt Committee, which has been denouncing large numbers of once-reputed Rembrandts as the work of pupils and followers. This show consists of 46 paintings acquired by the committee, plus 12 now ascribed to lesser men, with background material to elucidate the criteria.

NATIONAL GALLERY: Trafalgar Square, WC2 (01 479 3321). Daily, 10am-6pm (Wed, Fri to 9pm).

WATERCOLOUR EXHIBITION: Agnew's annual show of watercolours has been going strong since 1867. Like last year's, the show is small and more select. Highlights include the second Turner that has ever been bought, *Goatstoe*, the Entrance to Portmahon Harbour, a major Colman, and a number of early Constables and late Palmer.

WILLIAM TELL: John Cox's production of Rossini's epic opera returns to Covent Garden, conducted now as in the production's first incarnation by Michel Plasson. The impressive Gregory Yurish takes the title role, while the taking part of Arnold is taken by high tenor Chris Merritt. Jane Eaglen sings Mathilde (see review, right).

THE ROYAL BALLET: Covent Garden's resident company performs in Birmingham this week. On offer is Kenneth MacMillan's passionate *Manon* and a triple bill of Ashton's cool *Alfonso*, MacMillan's *Chelvi* and ballet *Whisper* and Balanchine's *Ballet* by the Royal Ballet.

ANGELS IN AMERICA: Strong performances in Tony Kushner's English but vigorous drama. Auds, religion, politics, everything. National (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (01 479 2252). Tonight-Thurs, 7.30pm, mat Thurs, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm, 10.15pm.

THE COTTON CLUB: An impression of the Harlem night scene, low on energy, low on storylines. Aldwych, WC2 (01 479 3366). Mon-Fri, 7.30pm, Sat, 8pm, mat Wed, 2.30pm, Sat, 4pm, 10.15pm.

THE DARK RIVER: Accompanied revival of Rodney Ackland's 1927 drama, a naive and nostalgic in a grand drifft towards war. Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (01 846 3633). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 4pm, 10.15pm.

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN: Juliet Stevenson, Michael Pennington, and a superb cast in a production of a play by 19th-century dramatist, St. Martin's Lane, WC2 (01 479 3322). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Thurs, 3pm, Sat, 4pm, 10.15pm.

DIGGING FOR FIRE: A drunk in a quest for modernism in the form of a play by John Hughes, a savage indictment of the literary establishment. Bush, Shepherd's Bush Green, W12 (01 743 3388). Mon-Sat, 8pm, 10.15pm.

ELEPHANTINE: Three generations of clever women, expert in spitting but emotionally troubled. Refreshing play by Lee Blessing, subtly acted. Greenwich Studio, Prince of Orange, 189 High Road, SE10 (01 859 2862). Tues-Sun, 8pm, 10.15pm.

AN EVENING WITH GARY LINEKER: Sometimes drunk, but at the heart of a frustrated comedian married to a soccer nut. Duchess, Covent Garden, WC2 (01 479 3366). Mon-Thurs, 8pm, Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.45pm, 10.15pm.

FROM A JACK TO A KING: Witty and stylish version of Macbeth's climb to the top, set in the world of rock bands.

NEW RELEASES: BRANCHES OF THE TREE: Four generations of middle-class Bengalis come under Satyajit Ray's microscope. Tally but mellow discussion on life's vicissitudes. National Film Theatre (01 928 3322).

DECEASED (15): Goldie Hawn as the wife who doubts her husband's identity. Psychological thriller, well on story, but strong on atmosphere. Stars John Heard; director, Dumen Harris. Odéon: Kensington (01 479 3466). West End (01 479 3466).

KURPS (15): Immature police protection officer (Christian Slater) investigates the death of her father, after which he is killed. A comedy. Director, Bruce A. Evans. MGM Fulham Road (01 370 2636). MGM Haymarket (01 239 1527). MGM Oxford Street (01 479 3366).

SCORESSE X-4: Stimulating collection of scoresse's student films, plus the 1974 film *Amateur*, a short portrait of his parents in New York's Little Italy. ICA (01 930 3647).

LA BELLE NOUSSE (15): Jacques Rivette's hypnotic exploration of a painter and his model, struggling to complete an abandoned canvas. Close to a masterpiece. With Michel Piccoli. Emmanuel Bove. Jane Birkin. Chelsea (01 351 3747/3748). M20 (01 479 3366).

BUGSY (18): Warren Beatty as the gangster who invented Las Vegas. Sleek, witty, dazzling to behold. Starring Al Pacino, director, Barry Levinson. Chelsea (01 351 3747/3748). MGM Chelsea (01 351 3747/3748). Odéon: Kensington (01 479 3466). West End (01 479 3466).

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF VERONIQUE (15): French film about two girls (one of whom is French) who seem to share a life. With Irene Jacob, Philippe Volter. Curzon Mayfair (01 479 3366).

FREEKAGE (15): Emilio Estevez's last film, a comedy about a young man who is a great Englishman. With John Goodman, director, John Dahl. Curzon Mayfair (01 479 3366).

THE PRINCE OF TIDES (15): New York psychiatrist helps football coach face his demons. Romantic drama with ideas about a star, grandly acted by Nick Nolte. Barbara Streisand. Curzon Mayfair (01 479 3366).

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TODAY'S EVENTS

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Karl Knight

LONDON CITY BALLET: Despite its small size and limited resources, London City Ballet now regularly has leading dancers from Moscow and Leningrad as members of its company.

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA: Vernon Handley conducts the Philharmonic in a programme of music from the earlier part of this century. The repertoire includes Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*, Delius's *A Walk to the Paradise Garden*, and two comparative rarities in Bartók's *Overture to the Mikado* and Prokofiev's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.

THE MEZER: Tom Courtenay brings his brand of deadpan comedy to the stage in a play by John Hughes, a savage indictment of the literary establishment.

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MY FAIR LADY: The Lerner and Loewe musical, an important new look from stage designer David Fielding (echoing his work with English National Opera) and costume designer Jasper Carrott. Edward Fox is cast in the "Patsy" role of Professor Higgins, and Helen Hobson is an eminently likeable Eliza Doolittle.

SOUND OF MUSIC: A new production of the hugely popular musical which tells the love-story of a young American family in the West End, goes on a tour of the West End, goes on a tour of the West End, goes on a tour of the West End.

BACK UP THE HEARSE AND LET THEM SHUFF THE FLOWERS: Hampstead Theatre receives the world premiere of an intriguingly titled play by William Gassner. A team of water-fitter salesmen compete to grow wealthy by making us healthy.

ROSE AND SOUL: A topical new drama by Roy Fendall exploring the moral, legal and ethical questions faced by the Church of England on the ordination of women. Stars Robert Hardy and Angela Thorne.

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Fo, fun and a fair bit of fee

As Dario Fo's new play comes to London, Benedict Nightingale goes to Milan for an audience with the Vatican's least favourite dramatist

Dario Fo is a paradoxical person. He has been arrested as a subversive, and proposed for the Nobel Prize by no less a figure than Alberto Moravia. He found the old Italian Communist Party too right-wing and still regards himself as working class, yet he has an ample estate in Umbria, a seaside villa, and an apartment in Milan that might be a cross between a Belgravia penthouse and the British Museum. He writes violently anti-establishment pieces that have nevertheless triumphed in the heart of our establishment theatre, the West End.

Nobody can be sure if Fo's *The Pope and the Witch*, which opens in London next Monday, will match his *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* at the box-office, but it has set cash registers and alarm-bells ringing in Italy. What else was to be expected when the nation's most celebrated comic was dramatising and impersonating its most august resident? The play shows John Paul II's transformation from a paranoid bully-boy into a sackcloth-wearing crusader for contraception and legalised drugs, and with all Fo's instinct for mischief.

Growing addiction among the Italian young and the Mafia's control of the drug market were the reasons Fo wrote the play. "I needed a very important person going through a crisis, a crisis, a crisis. He would at first be against liberalisation of the drug laws and then in favour. It could have been a president, but in the end it was this very conservative Pope."

Fo is no friend of the Vatican, nor it of him. The Pope he regards as a "monomaniac", obsessed with birth control, hostile to progressive theologians, insensitive to events in South America. There is also a suggestion in the play that John Paul I was murdered by a cardinal in cahoots with the Mafia. "I don't know whether it happened," he says, "but you can expect everything from the Vatican. They have killed in the past."

Fo once called himself an atheist, but now says he is "deeply religious — I hate the pomp of the Church, the hypocrisy, I believe in a religion for man, for love, for the people". One of his best-known pieces shows Pope Boniface VIII mulling his way through a Good Friday orgy, then being kicked in the bottom by a country-bumpkin Christ. When it was seen on the box, it upset everybody from Zeffirelli, who felt it came close to mocking the gospels, to the Church hierarchy, which called it the most blasphemous show in television history. "Most cardinals would like to burn me," says Fo.

In his time, Fo has faced censorship and violence. He has been banned from television, and is still out of favour with the leading state theatres. He has been jailed in Sardinia and beaten up by neo-fascists in Rome. His wife, the actress Franca Rame, was once abducted, raped and slashed, again by right-wing extremists. Less seriously, he agreed to a duel with a cavalry officer, who withdrew his challenge when Fo insisted that the fight be conducted according to the rules of Thai boxing.

The Pope and the Witch provoked the usual protests from Catholic societies but, surprisingly, not from the Vatican. An eminent priest came to the theatre where it was playing and bought 15 copies of the text. Then there was a long silence, broken when the Pope himself went to talk to drug offenders near Florence. Fo's astonishment, his speech was similar to one in the play. The dramatist was flattered, but promises to make a complaint under the copyright laws. "He can't steal plays like that. He should have sent me a letter telling me he liked what I wrote and asking permission to use it." The Pope's response is as yet unknown.

Fo himself is one of the funniest playwrights and performers alive, but like many comedians he is disconcerting to meet. He sits there, a large, white-haired figure in striped shirt and red braces, smiling little, laughing not at all, and,



Dario Fo, holding one of his *commedia dell'arte* masks: "Most cardinals would like to burn me"

though unfailingly courteous, clearly having trouble containing his restlessness. Mostly we chatted in his apartment, which overlooks southern Milan from high in a posh block. Even without the six white sofas and the oriental maid in the Snoopy shirt, it would be an impressive place. There is an Etruscan lion dating from 600 BC, a lovely medieval pieta, rows of *commedia dell'arte* masks, a statue of St Sebastian (minus arrows) from Mantegna's workshop, Cretan vases, and lesser antiques galore.

Clearly, Fo has made a spectacular recovery from any early belief that property is theft — but who would begrudge his success? Few men give more in performance or keep a more punishing schedule. The day before we met he had given a solo show in Genoa, and the day afterwards, his 66th birthday, he was doing another. In Milan, he is told me with satisfaction, he could take 45 million lire (£20,000) a

performance at the box office. Unsurprisingly, it is now the private theatre owners who mostly seek his services. Is there not a danger, then, of losing the audiences who thronged to see him in less grand buildings in the 1970s? Well, Fo is a railwayman's son and says he prefers performing to the class to which he feels he still belongs. But he is happy to stimulate what he regards as the enlightened bourgeoisie and, especially, address the disaffected young: "Even if they don't come from a proletarian family, they often live in the same conditions. Even some upper middle class people are proletarian these days. Of course the offspring of the very rich don't come to my shows. They go skiing."

Isn't there another danger, which is that audiences laugh at the farce and ignore the radicalism? Fo has criticised some of his foreign directors, including West End ones, for pillaging the fun. His own performances are notable for coolness, detachment, "rigore", a balance between

hilarity and seriousness. "Comedy should always come out of the situation and be handled with care," he says. "Perform it as a tragedy, not forcing the fun. Then the grotesque will emerge."

Grotesque is a word Fo uses often. For him, it seems to mean reality rendered savagely satirical, as in the early Italian *commedia* or the plays of Molière, a dramatist he is fond of quoting. He it was who said that, while solemn drama might wet the cheeks, comedy opens the mouth and the mind, allowing the nails of reason to be embedded in the brain. "You remember things much better through laughter than through tears," declares Fo.

But remember what? These days Fo seems surer of what he is against — the human "pike" he sees feeding on the weaker fish — than what he is for. The accusation that he sympathised with the Red Brigades was always unjust. But he once embraced Marxism more

forthrightly than he does now. "All sensible people are very confused," he says. "We are facing a great crisis, perhaps a huge tragedy, and not only in Italy. A person with clear ideas is a kind of monster."

But only stupid people think that the fall of the Berlin Wall will destroy socialism. The established oligarchy of socialism may have died, but the real socialism is inside man. It wasn't born with Marx. It was in the communes of Italy in the middle ages. You can't say it is finished. "Maybe so, maybe not. What is clear is that Fo himself is far from finished. Soon he will be directing *The Barber of Seville* in Paris and Amsterdam. Then it is off to America with a play about the resistance the Indians put up to European invaders. It will show "hundreds of thousands killed in very cruel battles," and it will be very funny. "grotesque": quintessential Dario Fo. ●The Pope and the Witch is in preview at the Comedy Theatre, Porton St, SW1 (071-867 1045), opening next Monday

DANCE

If you go down to the woods ...

IF Mikhail Baryshnikov wants us to believe that his present venture is seriously concerned with bringing new audiences to a variety of modern choreographers, it would help to announce programmes in advance so that people paying unusually high prices could choose which works they wanted to see. Might it not have been courteous, also, when the opening-night bill (chosen only the day before) turned out to be different from the printed list, to have told the audience about the change?

But why pretend? We all know that most of the audience wanted only to see the star. They got plenty of him, appearing in five of the eight works given. This was a real rag-bag of a programme, mainly short bits and pieces, but it did contain two works of real choreographic interest.

One of these was Martha Graham's *El Penitente*. Based loosely on the rites of an obscure American sect, it takes the form of a medieval mystery play: short, episodic and symbolic scenes by a cast of three. It is a work well worth revisiting, even if Baryshnikov's team, for all his own touching earnestness as the Penitent, do not match the conviction and understanding of London Contemporary Dance Theatre's unforgettable cast at the work's last London showing, more than 20 years ago.

Mark Morris's *Canonic 3/4 Studies* is also attractive and suits the dancers better. Harriet Cavalli has arranged a piano score (with some amusingly impertinent balladic allusions), to which Morris presents varied and inventive

White Oak Project Sadler's Wells

comic dances: a trio, for instance, in which Baryshnikov deals briskly and efficiently with two importunate partners, and an ensemble switching between understated gestures and heavily exaggerated rhetoric.

The show's highly variable Morris at his astringent and amusing best. On the other hand, his solo for Baryshnikov to Alexander Tchernepin's Bagatelles is sometimes more perfunctory in its imitation of child-like play.

Baryshnikov and John Gardner perform an adagio by Lar Lubovitch admirably; the banality of the choreography is disguised only by the novelty of giving a big romantic duet to two men. Rob Bessner's dry, brusque solo *Break*, by Meredith Monk, would be eccentric even without the unsettling touch of listing it on the programme as Nancy Colahan in Jane Dudley's more familiar and better solo, *Harmonica Breakdown*. Carol Parker's solo, *Nocturne*, by Martha Clarke, is a mixture of Miss Havesham, *Giselle*, *The Dying Swan* and the *Foies Bergères*: is it meant to be funny?

The total effect is a sampler rather than a proper programme: a buffet, not a real meal. Odd to find no modern music and mainly monochrome designs. I cannot see this show sending many people off to see real modern dance companies.

JOHN PERCIVAL

ARTS BRIEF

Suitable choice

THIS weekend's final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition is to be a feast for eye as well as ear. The four players battling it out at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow will all be wearing outfits especially designed for them, courtesy of the "Lloyds Bank Fashion Challenge".

BBC 2 will screen the final on Saturday night — high notes, haute couture and all.

Last chance ...

SCOTTISH Opera's future now looks rosier, thanks to the Scottish Office's £500,000 rescue package and the signing of Richard Armstrong as music director. The company ends its winter season this week at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle (091-232 2061), with *La traviata*, Billy Budd and *Figaro*.

THEATRE

Romping rumpus revived

WHEN Thomas Shadwell, author of this good-natured satire, fell foul of the poet Dryden he found himself lambasted in the rhyming couplets of *MacFlecknoe*, characterised as the prince of dullness. By a singular chance his castle was imagined as being sited at the Barbican, and 300 years later it is to the Barbican (also described as being packed with brothel-houses) that this RSC revival comes, after last season's successful production at Stratford.

The satire is directed against the then recently-formed Royal Society, whose members busied themselves with new-fangled sciences. But Shadwell's weaponry falls a long way short of that of his model, Ben Jonson. This is not a Restoration equivalent of *The Alchemist* (which, in an excellent piece of planning, joins the repertoire from next week in the main house). But if the attacks on Sir Nicholas Gimcrack's study of glow-worms are genial, likewise those on his experiments with putrid meat and attempts to weigh air (none of which seems as ludicrous today as it did to Shadwell), this keeps them in the same tonal range as the exploits of the other characters who are all



Maidens: Saskia Reeves and Josette Bushell-Mingo

The Virtuoso The Pit

running circles round each other in the hope of ending up in bed with the mate of their choice.

The play opens with one good-looking man alone in bed, dreaming that girls break from the ranks of characters watching from the shadows to swoop affectionately upon him. By the end of the evening all but one of these characters have been paired off, some of them most unsuitably, through a succession of ruses, masquerades and abrupt de-

scents through a trap door. In her directorial debut for the company Phyllida Lloyd creates a romping rumpus of a show. Some of the scenes read pretty dully on the page, but she animates them with unexpected tricks and anachronisms that generally succeed and always supply a moment's pleasure.

Bruce and Longvil, the two young blades (Barry Lynch, Sean Murray), are in pursuit of Clarinda and Miranda (Josette Bushell-Mingo and Saskia Reeves), maidens of such indistinguishable personality that it quickly becomes unimportant to

remember which name belongs to whom.

Lynch and Murray, baritone and tenor respectively, bring a nice gravity and poise to the roles. Lynch's dry delivery of comedy is particularly engaging, especially when he is standing motionless beside the insanely affected Lady Gimcrack (Linda Marlowe), as she whirls her arms like the sails of a windmill in overdrive. Grimacing with ill-concealed lust, Marlowe is like a splendid Disney villainess left behind on the drawing board as too amazing to fit into any storyline.

Most of the men wear clanking boots and several women wear tatters, for no good reason except to look picturesque. One exception is Sir Formal Trifle, Shadwell's most original creation, whose rotund periods Guy Henry delivers without ever losing his way in the subordinate clauses, and whose pageboy bob and sober suit are evidently taken from the young Henry Irving. With Christopher Benjamin (frutifully brusque as Sir Nicholas and secure acting all down the line, Dryden's smear on Shadwell has been exuberantly wiped clean.

JEREMY KINGSTON

CONCERT

Dramatic encounter by moonlight

THREE works that were first performed within five months of each other during 1912/13 illustrated another variety of musical viewpoints as Simon Rattle continues his progress "Towards the Millennium" with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Composers then signalled new ways ahead, none more pointedly than Schoenberg in *Pierrot Lunaire*, although the programme-book for this concert neglected to mention that for everyone who attended a concert performance of this work in the 1960s and 1970s, there must have been a hundred more who became aware of it through the musically

CBSO/Rattle Festival Hall

Glen Tetley's version for the old Ballet Rambert.

Its expressionist theatricality was reinforced here by having Elise Ross match the vocal Sprechgesang with dramatic gesture in a production devised by Sylvano Bussotti, who also designed her Pierrot cloak and costume (made from 100-year-old Italian silk). And very becoming she looked and sounded, moving in and out of a spotlight representing the moonstruck milieu of the poems.

Her voice, with marginally more song than speech in its

delivery, nicely caught the musical inflections and nuances of Schoenberg's tricky setting, making the often awkward contours serve a poetic and not just virtuosic purpose. Rattle's conducting set this off against the sharply etched and carefully balanced instrumental texture of the orchestra's Contemporary Music Group, in which the pianist, not named with the others in the programme, looked surprisingly like Emanuel Ax.

He it was who appeared in more formal dress to deliver with magisterial technique the bold chordal effects, wide and angular solo writing and rapid fingerwork of Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto. Energetic

momentum and percussive vigour were combined with a touch of reflective lyricism, ensuring that the composer's youthful exuberance also had substance of musical character.

Rattle's enthusiasm for his saga of a century's music was even more clearly apparent in the rhythmic fluency and shimmering textures of Debussy's *Images*. It was only questionable that he should put the three-part "Iberia" movement at the end instead of as the centrepiece of the tryptic, where it achieves a more satisfying balance of musical content.

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ORTHOPAEDIC & MEDIBEDS

H. Ross Perot, a powerful Texan, is a short step away from trying for the White House, Jamie Dettmer reports

Lone star to save the US?



Richly ambitious: the plain-speaking H. Ross Perot in front of a family portrait in his office. His supporters consider him a crusader, and his enemies claim that he is a bully

Confusion is said to have clouded the face of a high-ranking Chinese politician on a visit to Dallas a few years ago when the Texan billionaire H. Ross Perot handed him as a gift a copy of one of his favourite books, the *American Scout's Manual*. After intense discussion, the Chinese delegation concluded that this must be the American equivalent of the *Little Red Book*. If Mr Perot had his way, it would be.

Come this autumn, the simple exhortations to pursue a truthful, clean-living life contained in the scout's handbook could well form one of the most extraordinary campaigns for the presidency in American history.

In a few months, Americans may be confronted with the vision of Mr Perot, a short man with US marine-style closely cropped hair, urging them in his high-pitched, folksy east-Texas twang to break with politics-as-usual and vote for him as president.

H. Ross Perot (the H stands for Henry), known by his admirers as the Dallas crusader, and by his enemies as a bully and a loudmouth, is

eager to mount an independent challenge for the White House. He has threatened to do so before. But since February, when he proclaimed that America was "in deep voodoo", and announced on a radio chat show his readiness to run, "if the American people ask me". Mr Perot has been fanning the flames of a candidacy which could set American politics alight.

Texans are used to Mr Perot's political ambitions. Since selling for \$2.5 billion (£1.7 billion) in 1984 a computer data firm he started 22 years earlier with \$1,000, Mr Perot has backed various Texas gubernatorial and congressional campaigns. They are also used to him keeping his word. In 1979, he delighted the lone star state and the rest of America by organising a derring-do commando raid to rescue two of his employees held hostage in a Tehran jail, an audacious escapade that thriller writer Ken Follet described in his book *On Wings of Eagles*, and secured for Mr Perot the image of man of action.

Mr Perot's first wildly improbable adventure occurred in 1969, when he responded to Henry Kissinger's worries

'They are like the marine corps,' one writer remarked. 'Heck, they are the marine corps'

about the condition of American POWs in North Vietnam. Mr Perot hired two Braniff jets and tried to airlift into North Vietnam 30 tonnes of supplies. Hanoi rebuffed him.

Since then, Mr Perot's links with the Pentagon have been strong. He is known to have helped the American government on a variety of highly classified missions. His name was linked to the Iran-Contra affair. It was during his involvement with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that he was said by friends to have formed a dislike for George Bush, a former CIA director. The differences between the two men are believed to have centred on the CIA's use of drugs trafficking.

Other rich men in American history have dreamt of riding to the nation's rescue and grabbing the presidency; their ambitions have generally been dismissed. No third party or independent candidate has ever been elected to the White House. Theodore Roosevelt came closest when he attracted 27 per cent of the vote when he challenged Woodrow Wilson in 1912 as candidate for the Progressive party.

What distinguishes Mr Perot's threat is the sheer scale of his wealth (*Forbes* magazine ranks his personal fortune as the 21st largest in the United States); the determination he shows in pursuing his goals; and a track record in business that has been one of the great American rags-to-riches success stories. "He is the most single-minded man on the face of the earth," says Peter

Elkind, the editor of the weekly *Dallas Observer*.

In go-getting Texas, a state littered with the powerful, the wealthy, and the ambitious, Mr Perot, despite being only 5ft 6in tall, stands out. Born in 1930 in the small Texas-Arkansas border town of Texarkana, to a less than affluent cotton-broking, horse-trading father, Mr Perot learnt early that to succeed you had to work. Above his bed, his mother tacked a Norman Rockwell print depicting a boy scout at prayer. Nowadays, Rockwell originals adorn his corporate suite.

Mr Perot's first business success came as a teenager when he ran a newspaper round in a ghetto of Texarkana that no other paper would go near. At 19, he went to Annapolis Naval Academy. After several years as a midshipman, he joined IBM as a salesman in Dallas to try to make money to support a young wife and start a family. He was filling his yearly sales quota by the end of January that year.

In 1962, he set out on a road that would make his fortune. With \$1,000 he launched Electronic Data Systems (EDS), and through the years he managed to pick up several lucrative federal and state health care contracts. A magazine described him as "the first welfare billionaire".

He employed large numbers of Vietnam veterans and ran EDS as a cross between a religious sect and boot camp.

Male employees were not allowed to have beards or moustaches and they had to wear white shirts and single-colour ties. "They are like the marine corps," one writer who studied EDS remarked. "Heck, they are the marine corps."

Mr Perot stamped his authority on the company in the same way the critics accuse him of behaving in any venture in which he is involved. On the record, prominent Texas politicians have only praise for Mr Perot. Off the record, they spit out bile. "He's too short and too rich," one commented. Another said: "There is only one way of doing business with him, and that's on his terms, or not at all. Him in the White House? God, that would worry me."

Few think Mr Perot would make it to the White House. Even so, support appears to be growing. A *Los Angeles Times* opinion poll, conducted last week, showed that 21 per cent of Americans would vote for Mr Perot. His appeal, in some ways, is similar to Jerry Brown's. They both appear as outsiders to an America that is fed up with Washington, politics and, above all, politicians. He has said he will run if his supporters get his name on the ballot in all 50 states. Last week, to further that aim, Mr Perot announced an interim running mate, Vice-Admiral James Stockdale, the Vietnam war hero.

A steady stream of television appearances has kept the Perot candidacy alive. He has taken a leaf out of Jerry Brown's book and installed a toll-free number and 100 telephone lines in his offices in North Dallas, and pre-recording lines in Florida. So far more than a million calls have been received urging Mr Perot to run. After one television appearance, when he said, "In

plain Texas talk, it's time to take out the trash and clean out the barn", the telephone system in North Dallas was "gridlocked".

The prospect of Mr Perot running for president is unnerving Republican campaign managers, who seem worried that disgruntled conservatives might vote for him and spoil George Bush's chances. They are particularly concerned that Mr Perot could secure Texas and Florida in a contest. Equally, some Democrat managers are cautioning their colleagues that a Perot candidacy might hurt the chances of their nominee.

Mr Perot is difficult to classify along right-wing/left-wing lines. He is pro-choice on abortion and for gun control. He wants more discipline in schools and stiffer anti-drugs laws. He supported the Vietnam war, but opposed Desert Storm. He prides himself on being a patriot. He wants to see social security for the wealthiest Americans cut.

There is no public hint of any Clinton-like scandal lurking in Mr Perot's background. He is a strong family man, said to be close to all of his four children. All have worked for him, as has his sister, Betty, who is involved in Mr Perot's charity work in Texas.

In a recent issue of the *National Review*, the influential conservative weekly, Ed Rollins, Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign manager, issued a warning to presidential and congressional candidates that the allegiance of American voters is up for grabs. "A tidal wave is about to sweep across America's political landscape. Outsiders can ride it straight into the corridors of power, insiders who resist will find themselves beached, far from Washington."

Mr Perot hopes he can ride the wave.

Hooked on a classic

Peter Pan, in *Hook*, will once again help Great Ormond Street Hospital

A five-minute documentary, narrated by children, is likely to steal the show at tomorrow night's West End premiere of Steven Spielberg's multi-million dollar epic, *Hook*.

The mini-documentary weaves its own brand of enchantment with a look at the history of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children and its enduring links with the story of Peter Pan and its creator, Sir James Barrie.

When he died in 1937, Sir James bequeathed all the royalties from any plays, films or books based on his children's classic to the hospital. When the book came out of copyright in 1987, Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, whose wife was chairman of the hospital's board of special trustees, persuaded the House of Lords to amend the Copyright Bill so that royalties from Peter Pan would continue to go to the hospital for ever.

The documentary was the brainchild of Michael Samuelson, the film lighting millionaire, whose son, Jamie, then aged eight, died at Great Ormond Street of aplastic anaemia in 1970.

Mr Samuelson, who is the hospital's appeals trustee and co-chairman of the organising committee of *Hook*, hopes that his film will inspire others to follow Barrie's example.

Five weeks ago he approached Tony Kaye Films, which specialises in making television commercials. Mr Samuelson, whose daughter Emma Samms is a soap opera actress in Hollywood, chose Tony Kaye "because they make very emotional commercials and I wanted this to be emotional". They, and everyone else involved — about 100 people in all — gave their services for nothing.

"People have been amazingly generous," Patricia Murphy, the documentary's director, says. A veteran commercial maker, she is more accustomed to making films about soap powders and hair shampoos. She advertised in the press and on the radio for anyone of any age who had ever been treated at Great Ormond Street, and was inundated with replies.

Among the 93-year-old woman who had an operation to remove a growth in 1906, the mother of an eight-month-old boy who is undergoing treatment for a club foot, and included a former Great Ormond Street nurse, Wendy Tomkinson, 86, whose parents named her after seeing the first stage *Peter Pan* in 1904.

Many of the children were recent patients at the hospital, and Miss Murphy admits that she was "shell-shocked" by some of their stories and the matter-of-fact way they recounted them.

"I had seven operations and I died three times and they brought me back to life again," said 12-year-old Robert Ellis.

Another 12-year-old, Ben Evans, asked whether he was now completely well after a series of operations to remove polyps from inside his nose, replied: "Yes, I haven't got anything wrong with me now — oh, apart from my cystic fibrosis."

The narrators are nine-year-old Simon, whose friend was treated at the hospital, and Yasmin, three, the daughter of a former patient, Yasmin, who is too young to read, repeated her lines two words at a time. Some of them caused problems. "She kept calling Mr Spielberg 'Mr Spielbug'," Miss Murphy says. There were tears and tantrums among the stars and a fight over a rabbit called Moses, but Miss Murphy was impressed by the mothers — "not nearly as pushy as stage mothers — have to deal with making commercials".

The narration includes a quotation by Charles Dickens from *The London Journal*, referring to the 22,000 children who died in London from infectious diseases in 1852 — the year that Great Ormond Street was founded: "What should we say of the rose tree in which one bud out of every three dropped to the soil dead?"

Miss Murphy ended up with 80,000ft of film, which included archive footage and stills of some of the earliest Peter Pans, such as Pauline Chase and Frances Day.

"It should have taken six months to make but we did it in four weeks," says Miss Murphy, who is making a longer version for television. Among the 19,000-strong audience at the Odeon, Leicester Square, will be the Princess of Wales, who is the hospital's current patron, following a royal precedent set by Queen Victoria and the present Queen, and *Hook*'s stars, Dustin Hoffman, Bob Hoskins and Robin Williams. The proceeds of the premiere, expected to be around £200,000, will go to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

SALLY BROMPTON



Good medicine: Dustin Hoffman and Robin Williams

WOMEN'S WAR



Julia Neuberger on reports from the feminist battlefield by Marilyn French and Susan Faludi. This Friday in The TES.

TES

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Special K is not a new brand of breakfast cereal, but a powerful drug whose use by teenagers is causing concern

Altered states of youth

Four o'clock in the morning and the shell-suit generation is still dancing at the late-night raves. Dressed in regulation SPX trainers and baseball caps, they sway trance-like to mixes with heart-stopping BPMs (beats per minute), many high on an exotic cocktail of Ecstasy (E) and amphetamines and now, it seems, a new drug: "Special K".

The club scene has come far since the emergence of acid house in 1988. First there was cannabis, then acid, then tabs of Ecstasy, the "hug-drug". Teenaged clubbers are constantly looking for something new to keep them going throughout the night. But they no longer know what they are taking.

Pure Ecstasy is now a rarity, while new hybrid drugs — cocktails of Ecstasy, LSD and amphetamines — have become common. The drug-taking is like the music that accompanies it: synthetic, ultra-modern and untested. "Special K" is the latest in a long line. It started being used surreptitiously as a substitute for Ecstasy by dealers because it was cheaper. Now it has attained a status of its own. Because Special K has only been used for a couple of months it is not even illegal, and it can be bought from dealers, usually as tablets at £10 to £15 each, and swallowed or crushed for sniffing.

Mike, aged 15, goes to the Astoria disco in West London whenever he can afford to, and has tried most concoctions offered to him by dealers.

"I don't get any buzz from E any more, and I do worry about its side effects. The papers say it can give you heart-stroke and heart failure. Special K is mellow. You feel weightless, your body is filled with light. Sometimes I am miles above the dancefloor. Sometimes I just want to cry."

Martin, aged 19, had not heard of Special K until last week. "It's far stronger than anything I've taken before. Unbelievable things happen, but you can't judge from your previous experiences what your next one will be like, and it is quite scary," he says. These were teenagers who had contacted drug dependency units in London and only then realised what they were taking.

Special K is made from Ketamine Hydro-Chloride, an anaesthetic drug used in cases of emergency and as a "buddy drug" for soldiers to administer to each other in times of war.

Dr Mel Morgan, a consultant anaesthetist at Hammersmith Hospital, in London, uses it for certain operations. "The drug is different to other anaesthetic agents. It separates the mind from the body, rather than sending people to sleep. It is also a very, very powerful painkiller, good for painful procedures and in emergencies such as the Moorgate Tube

disaster, when people need to be operated on immediately," he says.

According to Dr Morgan, the problems start in recovery. "When you start to emerge you have no sense of body image, you can feel totally disorientated, and you can have hallucinations, so in normal situations we prefer using other anaesthetic agents. The effects can be amplified by external stimuli, so if Ketamine is

The drug-taking is like the music: synthetic, ultra-modern, untested

used, the patient must recover in a quiet, dark room, otherwise it could be very frightening. I can't believe anyone would want to use it amid the noise and flashing lights of a dancefloor."

Dr Tony Dickenson, a senior lecturer in pharmacology at University College London, knows it is being used. He first became worried when his students spoke to him a couple of months ago about friends who were abusing Ketamine. "Chemically,

Ketamine's structure is close to Angel Dust or phencyclidine, which was popular in America ten years ago, and caused aggressive and violent behaviour and even brain damage in some heavy users," he says. Under medical supervision, Dr Dickenson says, the drug is safe. Patients do not seem to suffer withdrawal symptoms.

"On the street we have no idea how much they are taking, but it is enough for them to be having visual disturbances, deep trances and temporary loss of limb control," Dr Dickenson says. "They could easily have an accident under its influence. We also know nothing about its long-term effects."

Both doctors are sure that the drug is not being stolen from hospitals and veterinary practices. "This drug is as easy to manufacture as Ecstasy. Someone with a good working knowledge of chemistry could make it in any backstreet laboratory," Dr Dickenson says.

Drug dependency clinics as far apart as Plymouth and Liverpool have begun to hear of cases of abuse of the drug. It seems to be sold predominantly in London and Manchester, though no one has any idea of its prevalence.

Ian Wardle, the manager of Life-line, the Manchester drug agency,

was the first person to raise the alarm. "There are always reports of new mix-and-match drugs which we register. But Special K is the only new drug that seems to have taken off," he says. "We have had people ringing up, concerned by the bizarre effects of the drug. They want to know why it doesn't give them the same sense of empathy and collectiveness that they get from Ecstasy. They know now they are taking something different, and some of them really seem to like the new effects."

Most of the agency's queries are from people aged between ten and 20. Mr Wardle is worried about the side-effects because it is seems to give users the sort of withdrawal that is characteristic of heroin and LSD. "We don't know how dangerous it is yet, but it could be as bad for you as Ecstasy or worse," he says.

Ketamine is not a controlled substance under the Home Office's Misuse of Drugs Act, although Ecstasy is in category A, as is heroin. A spokesman says they are monitoring the situation, but Mr Wardle thinks that banning it will have little effect.

"The illegality of Ecstasy has had no effect on its popularity," he says. "We desperately need to educate young people and parents about side-effects of drugs, so at least they know what they are taking and are aware of the dangers."

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EDUCATION TIMES



Cuts loom as budgets bounce

Disquiet is growing over funding for state schools. And the problems will not be easily solved, John O'Leary reports

Whichever party takes power this week, the education secretary will face a growing clamour over the funding of state schools. Governors throughout England and Wales are drawing up budgets, which are unlikely to alter substantially because of electoral spending pledges.

The spectre of teacher redundancies has been raised annually by the teaching unions and local authorities trying to talk up the share of public spending devoted to education. Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, anticipated a repeat even as he announced the teachers' pay award, dismissing the claims as "annual ritual nonsense".

This year, however, there is more substance than usual in the scare stories. The local authorities may be exaggerating when they forecast the loss of 12,000 teaching posts, but there is no doubt that financial pressures are forcing governors to cut posts at a time when most would prefer to increase staffing levels to accommodate the national curriculum.

A survey of a dozen authorities in the *Times Educational Supplement* this week showed that 1,000 teaching and ancillary jobs were threatened. The sample included several of the authorities that have found most difficulty in balancing their budgets, but their experience is by no means unusual.

In Essex, which did not feature in

the survey, secondary heads met last Friday to protest at likely budget cuts averaging £20,000 a school.

Three sixth-form colleges found that they were losing £631,000 because the county decided that it could not afford full funding for the extra numbers staying on in education beyond 16.

David Kelly, the principal of Palmers College, in Grays, says: "We have lost £172,000, so I have almost cleaned out our contingency reserve and cut maintenance. And there will be larger classes. We are in an area that has not had a great tradition of further and higher education, but we have doubled participation over the last four years, and now we are being penalised for it."

There have been teachers' strikes in Staffordshire, where cuts of £7 million have been demanded, and in Brent, north London, where 18 teachers have been notified of redundancy. This month's teacher union conferences will hear calls for more concerted action.

Parents' organisations have also begun to express concern. The National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations said last week that it had received six reports in a fortnight of schools asking for

parental contributions to maintain staffing levels.

Today parents from a dozen authorities will give similar accounts at a news conference organised by the Campaign for State Education. Among them will be a group from St Paul's School, in Dorking, Surrey, where parents were asked for £100 a child to

prevent the loss of a teaching post.

Ministers accused the governors of mismanaging their budget, but other Surrey schools have run into less spectacular budget troubles.

London faces particular difficulties as authorities begin to lose the cushioning provided in transitional arrangements after the demise of the Inner London Education Authority. Wandsworth, in south London, has had a highly public dispute over cuts totalling £4 million, and many schools in Greenwich have lost more than

£100,000. The irony of the present situation is that it comes at a time when recurrent spending on education is rising, in real terms and as a proportion of national wealth. Mr Clarke claimed last week that more was being spent on education than in Japan or Germany.

Why, then, should the crunch be coming this year? The three main factors seem to be controls on local government spending, the size of the teachers' pay award and the spread of local management of schools.

Though some authorities, such as Essex, are not spending as much as the government allows for education and are in no immediate danger of having their expenditure capped, many of those in deepest trouble have little room for manoeuvre. Some, such as Warwickshire, are implementing deep cuts even after exceeding government limits. The election will determine whether spending limits are raised.

At the root of many schools' problems lies teachers' pay. Not only did the £60 million extra provided by the government fail to meet the full cost of the 7.8 per cent increase in pay for the coming year, but no allowance was made for the staging of last year's rises. The authorities estimate the second

phase of the 1991-2 settlement has added 2 per cent to next year's pay bill.

Governors' control of their own budgets has not only ensured that the full effects of funding shortfalls are more widely acknowledged, it has also accentuated the impact on particular schools. Local management was always intended to benefit popular schools at the expense of others, and formula funding means that those failing to attract enough pupils face financial problems. No longer can an authority protect schools in difficulty by providing them with extra pupils.

The other main factor is the recession, which has had a marked effect on the mobility of teachers. Previously, governors in most parts of the country could expect to lose a number of staff each year, allowing them to shed posts, rather than sack people, if the books failed to balance.

Official statistics show that some of the local authorities' previous estimates of job losses have been more accurate than ministers admit, but redundancies have not been necessary to achieve the necessary savings.

Now that teachers are tending to stay put, cuts are more likely to require redundancies. Teachers' pay accounts for 80 per cent of school spending, and governors have nowhere else to turn to satisfy the legal requirement to produce a balanced budget.

Time to act on schools drama

A REPORT to be presented by the Arts Council at the National Theatre tomorrow will intensify the debate about whether drama should be a foundation subject in the national curriculum.

Art, music and physical education are about to become statutory subjects, but drama muddles on as a teaching method under the wing of English and a handful of other subjects.

The National Curriculum Council was to issue its guidance on drama last year, but the project was mysteriously dropped. The Arts Council stepped in by forming a working party to bring out guidelines of its own.

The working party has tried to cut through much of the theory and jargon that threatens to strangle the subject. "Drama in Schools" identifies three fundamental activities: making, performing and responding. Pupils might, for example, explore an idea through improvisation and articulate it in dramatic form.

Although there is no statutory requirement to follow them, the targets and the recommended study programmes give the most practical advice yet on how to structure a well-rounded programme of drama teaching for the national curriculum.

Without the stamp of the NCC, "Drama in Schools" has, however, no more authority than the good name of Arts Council expertise. It is merely guidance, which means that though the quality of drama teaching may be improved, the quantity, especially in primary schools, is left to the discretion of head teachers.

Is it fair to expect teachers to take on yet more attainment targets? I suggest it is if it helps them to make more effective use of the little time they have for drama.

However, even if enough time and resources were found for drama, many teachers still lack the confidence to teach it well. One likely effect of the report will be a big demand for in-service training.

But as education authorities

cut their budgets, in-service training in drama becomes less affordable.

Increasingly, the theatre profession is finding itself a main provider. Both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre have extensive education programmes for pupils and teachers, although their courses are oversubscribed.

Most schools have little contact with the theatre profession and that is one deficiency the report tries to remedy. It explains how schools can get help from theatres while the council itself is putting greater pressure on its clients to reach out to schools.

The underlying message of "Drama in Schools" is that drama should be regarded as a foundation subject. Undeniably, the subject has a future. Drama is highly popular at secondary level, where the number of pupils taking GCSE drama far exceeds those for music. Drama courses have proliferated in sixth-form colleges, colleges of further education and universities.

Despite the requirement to follow them, the targets and the recommended study programmes give the most practical advice yet on how to structure a well-rounded programme of drama teaching for the national curriculum.

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But as education authorities

VIEWPOINT

Kenneth Rea



be raised in the near future. The education secretary has indicated no intention of considering it as a foundation subject. A Labour government would be only marginally more sympathetic, setting up a review of the national curriculum to elicit teachers' views on what should be taught.

The theatre profession now needs to swing its weight behind the cause. Otherwise, drama will remain squeezed among the stronger subjects. In the meantime, "Drama in Schools" does at least give teachers the immediate means to steer it towards clearer policies and more focused teachers.

The author teaches drama at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and is a member of the Arts Council working party.

"Drama in Schools" is available from local education authorities or from the Arts Council, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ (071-733 0100).

Funding shortages also mean cutbacks for a unique form of help

Hospitals close their doors to special needs teaching

Until last October, Mark Trembling, a 10-year-old with learning difficulties, was getting free weekly specialist teaching at a London hospital. Now his parents, part-time workers, may have to spend up to £25 a session for the help he needs to avoid being thrown on the educational scrap heap. He is one of nearly 200 children who have had their special teaching cut in London in the last 12 months.

Early last year, six hospitals in London had units for children with learning difficulties. Now all their teaching has been cut and most units are barely surviving. In the past few weeks, 109 children who were getting free tuition at the Bloomfield unit, at Guy's Hospital, have been told that they must either leave or pay.

At a time when concern at falling education standards is high, five centres with highly trained and experienced staff are being allowed to vanish or are being privatised, not because of any carefully devised plan but because of cuts, market forces and administrative convenience. Part of the problem is that the units fall between two administrative stools. Whether closure of the centres is in the best interest of the children has never been asked.

Despite the medical aspect, the 1981 Education Act that deals with special needs made them the responsibility of education departments, and several of the closures followed withdrawal of funds by the local education authority.

Alan Wood, the head of special needs at Southwark education authority, which has stopped funding the Bloomfield unit, said that because most users were not from Southwark, the expense of trying to recoup the cost of the service was prohibitive.

In any case, he said, the service provided by the unit could be covered by mainstream schools. "And," he added, "we had to reduce our budget."



Tom Formikel, a teacher at the Bloomfield unit of Guy's hospital, in south London, with Steven Miles, aged 10

act as an alternative source of expertise.

"If parents are having difficulty with the school or believe their child's case is not being taken seriously," said Helen Redwood of the Charing Cross unit (cut back by Fulham and Hammersmith), "they can

act as an alternative source of expertise. "If parents are having difficulty with the school or believe their child's case is not being taken seriously," said Helen Redwood of the Charing Cross unit (cut back by Fulham and Hammersmith), "they can

What happens to the children who have lost their extra teaching at the hospitals? A few, such as Mark Trembling, may get private tuition, which their parents can ill-afford. In theory, they all remain the responsibility of the education authority. But in the case of at least one closure, involving 50 children being taught at St Bartholomew's,

Benny Grant, the principal psychologist for Hackney, the local education authority (LEA), said there were no plans for additional schooling. Michael Fallon, the education minister responsible for special needs, responded sternly. "If Hackney has indeed made no provisions," he said, "my department will be on to them to make sure they fulfil their obligations."

He also said his department could act as a court of appeal if parents were not satisfied with the local authority. But are local schools the best places for children with special needs, and can the education authorities effectively replace the hospitals? The short answer is that nobody really knows.

"There is a debate as to whether hospitals are the best place to teach these children," said Nick Hunt of the Riverside Health Authority, which was responsible for the recent-

ly closed unit at Westminster. Somebody who believes that schools are not the right place is James O'Shea, the former head of the Bloomfield unit, who has left because of the decision to privatise the unit.

"One per cent of school children suffers from significant underachievement," he said. "These kids see themselves as failing. Our work here is to help them to feel better. That cannot be done in a school situation."

Local authorities seem unlikely to be able to match the hospitals' resources. At St Thomas's, for instance (the only unit not at present under threat), a child being assessed is seen over two days by a teacher, a clinical psychologist, an occupational therapist, an audiologist, an orthoptist and a speech therapist.

Neither Southwark nor Fulham and Hammersmith local education authorities was prepared to say what the qualifications of their teachers were nor how much one-to-one teaching those children would now get.

Some managers, like those now running the Bloomfield unit, believe the units may find a niche in the new internal NHS market. "We can sell a service if we can demonstrate a need," said Jon Drinkwater of the St Bartholomew's unit. "We are going to conduct a clinical audit tied to demand."

Mr Hunt was the most blunt about the future. "Assessments could be paid for by schools, but these are uncharted waters: nobody is interested at present," he said. "Riverside has, however, decided that dyslexia treatment is a marketable service."

In Mr Fallon's view, the closure of the units is a matter for the local authorities. "By the end of 1993," he said, "when the LEAs have submitted policies on special needs, we will have a clearer picture of the way the different areas are coping."

Until then, Mark Trembling and the other children face an uncertain future.

JEROME BURNE

Additional research by Charlotte Vesey

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BBC1

6.00 **Cee-fax** (92544) 6.30 **BBC Breakfast News** (21771419)
 9.05 **Election Call**, Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, answers questions from viewers and listeners. Simultaneous broadcast with Radio 4 (1361457)
 10.00 **News**, regional news and weather (4708877) 10.05 **Playdays** (r) (5869419) 10.25 **The Family News** (r) (4701964) 10.35 **Gibberish**. Word game for two teams of celebrities. The question-master is Kenny Everett (7903631)
 11.00 **News**, regional news and weather (3053506) 11.05 **Rosemary Conley**. Advice on good health. Plus Susan de Vere assessing the worth of low-calorie, pre-packed meals (8905056) 11.30 **People Today** presented by Minam Stoppard and Adrian Mills. Includes **News**, regional news and weather at 12.00 (8676457)
 12.20 **Pebble Mill**. A Motown musical special featuring performances by the Four Tops, the Supremes and the Temptations (r) (8604167) 12.55 **Regional News** and weather (13601341)
 1.00 **One O'Clock News** and weather (15322)
 1.30 **Neighbours**. (Cee-fax) (s) (6428525) 1.50 **Turnabout**. Rob Curling with another round of the word power quiz (64289341)
 2.15 **Kids Landing**. California-based drama serial (9623051) 3.00 **The Odd Couple**. Comedy series about two mismatched apartment-dwellers (1435361)
 3.25 **Bazaar**. Domestic films magazine (1447631)
 3.50 **Bodger and Badger**. First of a 12-part children's comedy (r) (6659849) 4.05 **Graveyard High**. Cartoon series (r) (1856768) 4.30 **Patrick Pataca**. Episode one of a new 12-part industrial espionage serial starring Hendrik Martz. (Cee-fax) (8226983)
 4.55 **Newsround** (3251419) 5.05 **Blue Peter**. (Cee-fax) (s) (8457273) 5.35 **Neighbours** (r) (Cee-fax) (s) (685254) Northern Ireland: Inside Ulster
 6.00 **News** with Peter Sissons and Moira Stuart. (Cee-fax) Weather (693) 6.30 **Regional News** Magazines (723). Northern Ireland: Neighbours; Wales (60) Parry Election Broadcast (Pleid Cymru)
 7.00 **Wogan**. Guests include Professor Stephen Hawking (s) (6761) 7.30 **Watchdog**. Includes a report on how most glass furniture sold in this country continues to flout British safety standards (457)



Hosting a trip down memory lane: Philip Schofield (8.00pm)

8.00 **Television's Greatest Hits**.
 ● CHOICE: Tapping the vein of small screen nostalgia which has been variously exploited by *Telly Addicts* and Channel 4's *TV Heaven*, this new series is a mix of television moments, news clips and personality interviews pegged to a year between 1962 and 1987. The choice of Philip Schofield as host seems a clear bid to the younger audience who otherwise might be put off such a trip down memory lane, and the content is aimed squarely at the popular market. Tonight's year is 1970. Among the less-than-momentous events covered are Ronnie Corbett's appearance on *This Is Your Life*, Dana Winning the Eurovision Song Contest and feminists heckling Bob Hope at Miss World. James Lovell, the American astronaut who was nearly lost with the Apollo 13 spacecraft, seems almost to have stayed in from another show. (Cee-fax) (s) (2709)
 8.30 **Man's Best Friend**. The second of three documentaries in which Desmond Morris explores how domestic animals are creatures of the wild at heart (r) (Cee-fax) (4544)
 9.00 **News** and Campaign Report with Michael Burk. (Cee-fax) Weather (167167)
 9.50 **Party Election Broadcast** by the Labour party (701693)
 10.00 **Panorama**. The prime minister is interviewed live by David Dimbleby (704273)
 10.40 **Cagney and Lacey**. The New York policewomen investigate the murder of a Cambodian lawyer and discover that it could have been racially motivated (r). (Cee-fax) (236457)
 11.30 **The Victorian Kitchen Garden**. A walled garden is restored to how it was a century ago (r). (Cee-fax) (80148)
 12.00 **Advice Shop**. A special report on discrimination against the Irish in this country (4261303)
 12.20 **Open on the Hustings**. The day's main election speeches (4905571)
 12.50 **Weather** (4984553)

BBC2

6.45 **Open University: The English Landscape Garden** (7276631). Ends at 7.10
 8.00 **Breakfast News** (6137252)
 8.15 **Holiday Outings**. Anne Gregg takes a week-long painting course in Provence (r) (6127148) 8.30 **Boating Butler**. Tony Butler concludes his trip along the rivers and canals of the Midlands (r) (30070)
 9.00 **Film: Design for Scandal** (1941, b/w) starring Rosalind Russell and Walter Pidgeon. Comedy about a reporter assigned to discredit the female judge who awarded his wife a heavy divorce settlement. Directed by Norman Taurog (3105029)
 10.20 **Film: Mannequin** (1957, b/w) starring Joan Crawford and Spencer Tracy. Drama about a woman who escapes from a loveless marriage to make good, only for the man to re-enter her life — this time as a blackmailer. Directed by Frank Borzage (1538964)
 11.50 **Stage Struck**. Five aspiring thespians take a drama course (r). (Cee-fax) (7552254) 12.30 **Among the Wild Chimpanzees**. The life of Jane Goodall in East Africa (r) (7088728) 1.20 **Fingermouse**. Animation (r) (83094506) 1.35 **In the Post**. Specialist philately (r) (12241803)
 2.00 **News** and weather (30200896) followed by **Grand Prix**. Brazilian highlights (r) (4952148)
 3.00 **News** and weather (9326821) followed by **Village Praise** from the Sherwood Forest area (r). (Cee-fax) (s) (9761525)
 3.40 **Gwynn Christian's Serendipity**. The chef and restaurateur samples tropical fruits in Sri Lanka (r) (2572709) 3.50 **News**, regional news and weather (2261693)
 4.00 **Film: The Great Gatsby** (1949, b/w) starring Alan Ladd and Betty Field. F. Scott Fitzgerald's tale of lavish living and private passion in the Scotts' society during the 'Roaring 20s'. Directed by Elliott Clawson (1435361)
 5.30 **Film 32** with Barry Norman. Includes a review of the Oscar awards (r) (s) (922) 5.45 **Bitten** by the Bug 5.45 **Experiment** 5.55 **Party Election Broadcast** (Pleid Cymru)
 6.00 **The Addams Family**. Classic ghoulish humour based on the series of cartoons published in New Yorker magazine. (Cee-fax) (851438)
 6.25 **DEF**. It begins with *The Great Escape*. The adventures of streetwise young man living with relations in affluent California (931148)
 6.50 **Standing Room Only**. Football magazine. Includes Celtic manager Liam Brady talking about his career and the modern game (757231)
 7.30 **Young Musician of the Year**. Five musicians contest the piano final (428709)



Reading in an ancient tongue: A Falasha holy man (8.10pm)

8.10 **Horizon: Before Babel**.
 ● CHOICE: There are some 5,000 languages in the world, but some linguists claim that they can be traced back to a handful of groups and ultimately to a single source. Christopher's film reports on the attempts by experts from the old Soviet Union, the United States and Israel to stand up the proposition, and the scepticism that still surrounds their efforts. To the lay person, the research seems surprisingly simple, being in many cases based on groups of words from many different tongues that have clear similarities. Linguists in the Soviet Union have the process back 15,000 years, postulating the existence of a language which was spoken across half the world's surface. From here the jump to a single language source is not a huge one, and biological and archaeological evidence tends to point the same way. (Cee-fax) (s) (551761)
 9.00 **The Many Whitehouse Experiences**. Off-beat comedy sketches (s) (2780) 9.30 **Ruby Taylor's Trip**. The Irish Ruby Taylor goes to California to seek the advice of shamans (r). (Cee-fax) (53425)
 10.30 **Party Election Broadcast** by the Labour party (772419)
 10.40 **Newsnight** with Jeremy Paxman (941877)
 11.35 **The Late Show**. Arts and media magazine (s) (558051)
 12.05 **Weather** (5883571)
 12.10 **Open University: The Gun Industry** (4988804). Ends at 12.40

ITV

6.00 **TV-am** (8243898)
 9.25 **Lucky Ladders** (r) (4876322) 9.55 **Thames News** (8557362)
 10.00 **The Time ... The Place ...** Mike Scott chairs a discussion on a topical subject (2980457)
 10.40 **This Morning**. Magazine series (1674815)
 12.10 **Rosie and Jim**. Children's puppet series (7059064)
 12.30 **Lunchtime News** with Nicholas Owen and Sonia Ruseker. (Oracle) Weather (8317877) 1.10 **Thames News** (24734728)
 1.20 **Home and Away**. (Oracle) (43108952) 1.50 **A Country Practice** (s) (55176436)
 2.20 **Yan Can Cook**. Martin Yan prepares Shanghai duck salad and double prawns in spicy tomato sauce, and a range of garnishes (5920825) 2.50 **Families**. Soap linking the north of England with Australia (s) (4841457)
 3.15 **ITN News** headlines (8176588) 3.20 **Thames News** headlines (5821411) 3.25 **The Young Doctors**. Drama series set in a large Australian city hospital (1423051)
 3.55 **Cartoon** featuring Porky Pig (4458916) 4.00 **Wait of the Banthee**. Fantasy adventure series starring Michael Angeli and Susie Blake. (Oracle) (s) (7703083) 4.25 **Chip 'n' Dale - Rescue Rangers**. Cartoon (2993964) 4.50 **Art Attack**. Art show series presented by Neil Buchanan (254815)
 5.10 **Blockbusters**. General knowledge quiz game for teenagers. With Bob Holness (8441612)
 5.40 **Early Evening News** with John Scheck. (Oracle) Weather (587273)
 6.00 **Home and Away** (r). (Oracle) (761)
 6.30 **Thames News**. (Oracle) (572544)
 6.55 **Party Election Broadcast** by the Labour party. (Oracle) (173457)
 7.00 **The Magic Comedian**. Comedy and magic from Rudy Coby, Jeff Jackson, David Williamson and Joe Pasquale who are joined this week by illustrious John and Charlotte Pendragon (1457)
 7.30 **Coronation Street**. (Oracle) (525)



Open to the audience: Sue Lawley acts as host (8.00pm)

8.00 **World in Action: The Granada 500** presented by Sue Lawley. Five hundred voters from Bolton, a town with two marginal seats, question party leaders (6631)
 9.00 **In Suspicious Circumstances**.
 ● CHOICE: Edward Woodward dusts down the files and re-opens the cases of a popular boxer and the first woman to be hanged in Britain in the 20th century. Freddie Mills was briefly the world light heavyweight champion, went on to become a genial television personality and was found shot dead near his home in 1965. The verdict was suicide, but Mills's association with London gangland led many to suspect murder. Louise Masset was convicted of killing her young son, but went to the gallows protesting her innocence. Dramatic reconstructions feature Michael Melia, late of *EastEnders*, as Mills and Michelle Newell as Masset. If these playlets are more successful at raising questions than answering them, the series is on firm ground in realising that there is nothing like a mysterious death to arouse public curiosity. (Oracle) (s) (3167)
 10.00 **News** at Ten with Julia Somerville and Alastair Stewart. (Oracle) Weather (39341) 10.30 **Thames News** (792273)
 10.40 **Film: Trapped in Silence** (1986) starring Kiefer Sutherland. A made-for-television drama about the book by psychologist Torrey Hayden, about a musician in a condition in which people refuse to speak. Directed by Michael Tuchner (68852186)
 12.30 **Sportsworld Extra**. Includes boxing, the British welterweight title eliminator between Eamon Loughran and Tony Eubank (48620)
 1.30 **Film: The Court Martial of George Armstrong Custer** (1977) starring James Olson. A made-for-television war-movie has been made about the events after the massacre at Little Big Horn, which Custer survived only to be accused of allowing his men to be slaughtered. Directed by Glenn Jordan (53945)
 3.30 **Reap the Whirlwind** (s) (22465) 4.30 **James Come Home**. The Manchester band James in concert in their home town (72484)
 5.30 **ITN Morning News** with Tim Neilson (32133). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

6.00 **Channel 4 Daily** (8241428)
 9.25 **Film: The Phantom Light** 1934, two starring Gordon Harker and Binnie Hale. Comedy thriller about a group of people operating on the insurance investigators catch a gang of thieves (542723)
 10.45 **Hamilton in the Music Festival** (559725)
 11.00 **Kingdoms of the East**. A *Survival* documentary on the unusual animals that inhabit Hong Kong (r) (5444)
 12.00 **Right to Reply** (r). (Teletext) (s) (25254)
 12.30 **Business Daily** presented by Susanah Simons (55877)
 1.00 **Sesame Street**. Early learning series (r) (45932)
 2.00 **Film: Rulers of the Sea** (1935, b/w) starring Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Will Fyfe and Margaret Lockwood. Nautical drama about the 19th century rivalry between steam and sailing ship owners. Directed by Frank Lloyd (117877) 3.45 **The Hoarder**. Canadian animation (5209308)
 4.00 **Flowering Passions**. Anna Pavlova meets the man trying to breed the perfect rose (r). (Teletext) (354)
 4.30 **Fifteen to One**. Fast-moving general knowledge quiz (r) (438)
 5.00 **The Late Late Show**. Music and chat from Dublin, hosted by Gay Byrne (1070)
 6.00 **The Cosby Show**. American domestic comedy (r). (Teletext) (631)
 6.30 **Tonight with Jonathan Ross**. The guest is actor Fionn Whitmore (983)
 7.00 **Channel 4 News** with Jon Snow and Densie Sazdovitch. (Teletext) Weather (214167)
 7.50 **Voters**. Four Llanelli construction workers discuss general election issues (46864)
 8.00 **Brookside**. Soap set in suburban Merseyside. (Teletext) (5419)
 8.30 **Evening Show**. Comedy series set in small town America starring Burt Reynolds as the local school's football coach (s) (7254)



Inside view: members of Hackney police force (9.00pm)

9.00 **Cutting Edge: Coppers**.
 ● CHOICE: Hackney in East London is described in this film as Britain's most notorious police district. For years officers have faced allegations of malpractice. Scotland Yard is currently investigating accusations of corruption and drug dealing by local officers. The Hackney Community Defence Association has published dossiers on 30 officers and is pursuing 25 actions against the police in the civil courts. The police report that they are trying to do their best against heavy odds in a violent and impoverished inner-city area where the streets are rife with crime, drugs and prostitution. Paul Greengrass's documentary presents an inside view of the Hackney police and their officers. It includes the first television footage of an internal police complaints hearing. The film tries to illuminate without taking sides, revealing an accumulation of antagonism and mistrust which will be desperately hard to break down (1709)
 10.00 **Northern Exposure**. Comedy starring Rob Morrow as a New York doctor working in a remote Alaskan village (s) (12296)
 11.00 **Timecode**. Rituals of Love. Silent series made by film-makers and video artists from around the world (s) (537583)
 11.45 **Midnight Special** presented by Sheena McDonald. Includes a party political broadcast by the Labour party (201070)
 1.45am **Tonight with Jonathan Ross**. As 6.30pm (s) (84378) Ends at 2.15

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SATELLITE

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 News on the hour. 6.00am News (809372)
 7.30 **The Confessions** (13815) 10.00 **News** with Election News (16996) 11.30 **Rowing Record** (70805) 12.00 **News** Hour (8269)
 1.30 **Good Morning America** (28099) 2.30 **Good Morning America** (34341) 3.30 **Travel** to the 100th Anniversary of the Wright Brothers (3322) 5.00 **Live at Five** (94099) 6.30 **Newsline** (76029) 8.30 **News** (2002638)
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